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To my parents and sister

The Religious Topography of Late Antique Rome (AD 313-440): A Case for a Strategy

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Abstract of Thesis

The thesis argued is that in the fourth and fifth centuries ecclesiastical authorities in Rome sought to Christianise the city and its inhabitants through the location of new basilicas within the walls. The current consensus argues that all the churches constructed within the city were built where they were due to Christian land ownership of that site, because an area was a particularly populous one, or that there was a pre-Constantinian 'house-church' on the spot. This, for me, is looking at the city on too superficial a level. If we move away from this perspective and more towards a viewpoint that actually sees these fourth and fifth century churches in the context of the buildings that surrounded them, we can then regard them in the way the contemporary population of Rome would have. In this way, I believe we can reveal an intentional programme by the Roman Church of placing many of its centres of worship in strategically useful areas for its own benefit. In other words, the frequent proximity of these churches to other important buildings or public areas I believe had an effect on worshippers at those churches and on general passers-by. The intended effect, I would argue, was to increase church attendance and create visible and memorable Christian markers throughout the city in order to gradually 'Christianise' it.

I put forward the idea that there were four main factors that Christian builders of this period consciously considered and looked for when they were building a new church. They were: (i) is it easily accessible or highly visible? (ii) is it close to an area of frequent public congregation? (iii) is it near to a significant pre-existing pagan structure? or (iv) is it proximate to a bath house and therefore having some sort of relationship with it? Not all the Christian churches of this period fit these criteria but, I conclude, most do and therefore argue for a conscious strategy by the Church to Christianise and consequently 'de-paganise' the city.

The criteria I have described are not however new maxims for religious buildings. Most of these considerations were followed by the builders of pagan structures in the Classical city, although here for the benefit and notoriety of the builder rather than any desire to promote a specific cult. The increased popularity of a deity may have been an unintentional side-effect however, but whatever the case, such considerations certainly made temples the most visible and prominent buildings in a city. As a result, as well as examining Christian case-studies to argue my case, I will

also look at the pagan structures that follow the same rules, as their prominence and importance was something the Church wanted to replicate for its centres of worship. This, I hope, will serve as a comparison and show how builders of churches were merely using more ancient techniques to achieve their ends.

My thesis begins with a broad introduction including the historiography of the topic, which in fact overlaps many fields, and where I stand within it. My first chapter sets out my reasoning for thinking that the Roman Church controlled its own building programme independently from the state and so could potentially choose sites on which to build for its own benefit. The second chapter begins my discussion of these churches by looking at those where visibility and easy accessibility was a priority. The third section looks at those Christian centres that can claim an association with a pagan temple or shrine and what the implications of this may be. The fourth and fifth chapters examine those churches that have some sort of relationship with a theatre or circus or a bath-house respectively. Finally, I argue against the theory that some intra-mural churches were built on the site of famous martyrdoms by showing how the evidence for this is anachronistic and suspicious. To serve as a comparison, the belief that certain churches were built over a martyr's tomb is justifiable, as here we have reliable and convincing evidence. To complete the thesis I draw together the accumulated evidence and make my conclusions.

Contents

Introduction

Overview

This thesis will argue for a new approach to the topography of late antique Rome during the period from the so-called 'Edict of Milan', and Constantine's sole dominion in the West, to the death of Pope Sixtus III (313-440 AD). That is, from the beginning of the church-building programme in Rome until the time when Sixtus' own extensive scheme ended. Rome has always been seen as an example of a city that was created organically from hill-top villages to a sprawling metropolis, and capital of a huge empire. It has always been recognised that the temples in Rome, and in the Classical city in general, were built on hills and within fora. The significance of this has not been fully appreciated however, and questions have rarely been asked why this should be the case. Similarly, the location of the first churches in Rome, built from the fourth century, have been examined, but, I will argue here, in a superficial manner. I contend that if we examine the siting of the temples and first churches of Rome together, an interesting picture emerges of a city whose religious topography at least, was planned with a strategy in mind. Such an approach does however ignore the now hidden Christian topography of the ascetic aristocratic women of the city, to whom Jerome was a central figure. Their houses, no doubt important Christian centres in their day, cannot be located today and their domestic setting by-passes our focus on a deliberate building strategy by the Christian authorities. As a result, our discussion will not look at this aspect of early Christian Rome, but rather towards its more visible manifestations, the first churches. In this way, my definition of 'Christianisation' is one of a Christianisation of space.

The builders of temples and churches had different aspirations. When they chose where to build, they both wanted their investment to be noticed and admired, but it is only with Christian builders that there was a motivation for their cult to become more popular as a result. In any case, the location of temples in Rome meant they were widely visible and frequently seen, as their sponsors wished, but this also led to them dominating the popular consciousness of the Roman population for centuries. I will argue that there was a policy by the Roman bishops to challenge this dominance by

building churches in places which would Christianise the city and its people by (i) encouraging pilgrimage and church attendance; (ii) connecting Christianity with the popular entertainments; (iii) confronting or assimilating with the pagan monuments and the beliefs connected to them; and (iv) by utilising both large and small bath-houses, rather than ordinary wells and springs, to formalise and encourage baptism and perhaps encourage the bathers into church. These tactics will be explained by examining the churches that characterise each strategy, along with a few examples of their pagan precedents where possible

Historiography

To put my argument into some sort of context, an overview of the modern scholarship for the archaeology and topography of early Christian Rome would be appropriate. This began in earnest with Rodolfo Lanciani and his *Pagan and Christian Rome* (1895), a book that is in effect a write-up of the excavations he undertook in the city during the previous years. These excavations were the first thorough and systematic archaeological investigations of Rome's ancient remains, and the first to examine some of its early Christian features. This later period in Rome's ancient history had been largely overlooked by previous scholars, and Lanciani tried to remedy this further with part of his *The Destruction of Ancient Rome* (1899), but especially with *Wanderings Through Ancient Roman Churches* (1925). The latter was the first attempt to look at these initial churches of Rome archaeologically and historically, but was quickly followed by the more scholarly *Le Chiese di Roma nel Medio Evo* (1927) by Christian Hülsen. Hülsen's work was in some ways the second part of Samuel Ball Platner's towering contribution to the topography of ancient Rome, completed two years later by Thomas Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (1929), the first index to the known monuments of the city, but which ignored the Christian contribution. The fact that this omission has only recently been remedied in the recent *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* (1993-2000), and the in progress *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae: Suburbium* (2001-), shows the extent to which the Christian topography of the city had been regarded separately from its non-sacred and pagan buildings. In general, topographers of Rome had largely focused on its pre-Christian structures and their locations, whereas the examination of the first churches had been confined to archaeologists and architectural historians. The most comprehensive example of this is

Richard Krautheimer's *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae* (1937-77) which detailed the written and archaeological history of each of Rome's ancient and early medieval churches. Within this work, the results of the first excavations under Rome's churches, from the 1920s, were set out. These, aside from providing a valuable chronology to the fourth and fifth century church-building programme, made obvious the lack of evidence for a visible pre-Constantinian Christian topography in the city, something scholars of the first half of the twentieth century had assumed was the template for the later post-Constantinian landscape.[1]

The obvious next step after examining the archaeology and history of the early churches, was to look at where they were located within the context of the Roman urban landscape. This, however, has been done only in a cursory fashion, as we have said. The discussion has tended to focus on the large imperial churches, the '*domus ecclesiae* on the site of fourth century churches' idea, and the fact that the early Christian centres were not clustered together, but rather spread out through the city. The *domus ecclesia* theory, first proposed by Kirsch, is now regarded with a great deal of suspicion, as are the martyr stories, that claim a more ancient inheritance and history for many of the first churches, whose reliability has been questioned for some time.[2] Nevertheless, the debate elsewhere on this topic has not moved on very much. It has tended to see the churches in isolation from their contemporary surroundings, preferring to concentrate on socio-political motives for their locations. For example, the lack of Constantinian foundations in the pagan centre of the city was due to that Emperor wishing to avoid the ire of the pagan senate, a view first proposed by von Schöenebeck and taken on by Krautheimer.[3] Also, away from the thoughts surrounding house-churches or martyr stories, the

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[1] Eg. Kirsch J.P., *Die römischen Titelkirchen im Altertum* (1918); Vielliard R., *Recherches sur les origines de la Rome chrétienne*, (1941).

[2] Eg. Pietri C., 'Recherches sur les *domus ecclesiae*', *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, 24 (1978), pp. 3-21; Guidobaldi F., 'L'inserimento delle chiese titolari di Roma nel tessuto urbano preesistente: osservazioni ed implicazioni', in *Queritur inventus colitur. Miscellanea in onore di p. Umberto Fasola*, I, (1989) pp.384-5; Delehaye H., 'L'amphithéatre flavien et ses environs dans les textes hagiographiques', Analecta Bollandiana 16 (1897) pp. 235-52; Delehaye H., *Étude sur le légendier romain; les saints de novembre et décembre*, Subsidia Hagiographica 23 (1936), pp. 14-41.

[3] von Schöenebeck H., *Beiträge zur Religionspolitik des Maxentius und Constantin*, Klio, Beiheft 43, 2nd ed (1962), p.88; Krautheimer R., *Three Christian Capitals*, (1983), pp.28-9 (n.19). This theory ignores the much more prosaic, and so less attractive, reality that the centre of Rome simply had no spare land for a large Christian basilica. The acquirance of such land would have meant the destruction of a famous, historical building, something that would have been political suicide for any emperor. See also Brandt O., 'Constantine, the Lateran, and Early Church Building Policy' in Rasmus Brandt J. & Steen O. (eds.), *Imperial Art as Christian Art, Christian Art as Imperial Art : Expression and Meaning in Art and Architecture from Constantine to Justinian*, pp. 109-14, where the Lateran is argued to have been a 'private' building and therefore not an appropriate addition to the city centre.

location of the smaller *tituli* within the city were explained by them simply providing a parish church for every *regio*. More recently, these smaller churches have rightly begun to be seen in the context of the buildings and roads around them at the time in which they were built. Both Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital* (2000), and Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches of Rome from the Fourth to the Seventh Century* (2005) for example, accept the importance of the surrounding buildings, spaces and roads for the church-builders. However, the implications of this are not explored, something I wish to do.[4]

I am seeing in the location of many of these *tituli*, and some larger basilicas, a clear strategy by the Roman ecclesiastical authorities to Christianise the city. The Christianisation of Rome has never been viewed in this way before. It is only the actual appearance of the churches, rather than where they appeared, that has been regarded as part of this process. Previous scholarship on the Christianisation of the city has focused on its social and political dimensions, as well as the progress of the conversion of the Roman aristocracy. The most important contributions to this subject include Andreas Alföldi's *La conversione di Constantino e Roma pagana* (1943), which acknowledged how fundamentally pagan Rome still was, architecturally, socially and politically, long after Constantine's acceptance of Christianity. One of the most important works on the subject is Charles Pietri's *Roma Cristiana* (1976), that looked at the growth of the Roman Church as an organisation, and the physical manifestation of that – that is the appearance of churches in the urban landscape. Pietri noted that the building of these churches was a part of the conversion process, but went no further with that train of thought.[5] More recently the debate has moved on, identifying that 'Christianisation' was a more nuanced idea and encompassed all facets of city life, and was in many respects more of a secularisation at first. Nowhere is this more clear than in Augusto Fraschetti's *La conversione: Da Roma pagana a Roma cristiana* (1999). Essentially Fraschetti sees a secularisation of imperial ceremony and a gradual and slow Christianisation of the political, topographical and calendrical spheres. This latter element is also a focus for Michele Salzman's work on the Roman calendar in late antiquity.[6] The conversion of the aristocracy, in Rome and elsewhere, has also been looked at in more depth recently,

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[4] See also Crippa M.A., 'L'urbanistica tardoantica e topografia cristiana, III-VII secolo', in Crippa M.A. & Zibawi M. (eds.), *L'arte paleocristiana. Visione e spazio dalle origini a Bisanzio*, pp. 429-42.
[5] Pietri, RC, I. x
[6] *On Roman Time: The Codex-Calendar of 354* (1990); 'The Christianisation of Sacred Time and Space' in Harris W.V (ed.), *The Transformations of Urbs Roma in Late Antiquity* (1999), pp.123-34.

along with the governance of the city in general.[7] In this way, to view the Christianisation of Rome in terms of a strategic building programme is a new approach.

Summary of Thesis

Overall, my thesis attempts to view the Christianisation and general religious topography of the city of Rome in a new way. I am, for the first time, examining the new churches of the city in the context of the contemporary buildings and roads around them, and in the context of the religious politics of the period. That is, the need by the Roman Church to promote Christianity in the face of paganism and encourage conversion, and at the same time make Rome one of the most pre-eminent Christian centres in the world to justify the prominence the bishops of the city desired. It set out to do the latter, I believe, by trying to rival Jerusalem as a major focus of Christian pilgrimage by promoting the cults of the apostles Peter and Paul and the various Roman martyrs. I will show how this was carried out in practice through the creation of popular pilgrim routes for these martyrs, through the deliberate placement of several intra-mural churches along the roads that led to the catacombs and tombs of the martyrs outside the city. Alongside this went the creation of a largely imaginary history for these Christian heroes that brought them indelibly into the collective mindset of the people of Rome, and sought to mythologize many of the newly created churches from the fourth century. I further contend that the rate of conversion, and the increasing profile of Christianity, was to be enhanced through the construction of churches alongside popular entertainment buildings or next to, or in association with, bath houses. There are also a few examples of churches that seem to challenge, or wish to use their location to assimilate with, the pagan beliefs of the time and their monuments.

[7] Cameron, A., 'The Last Pagans of Rome' in Harris W.V (ed.), *Transformations*, pp. 109-21; Salzman M., *The Making of a Christian Aristocracy* (2002); Lizzi Testa R., *Senatori, populo, Papi: il governo di Roma al tempo dei Valentiniani* (2004).

1. *The Business of Building*: Building and Restoration in Late Antique Rome

In this chapter I would like to set out the key reasons why I believe that early Christian building in Rome had an agenda and a purpose behind it. Here I will show how this was a practical possibility because of the independence of Christian building projects from the state, and because of the money the Church had at its disposal to buy land. It is the location of many of the churches in the city, which will be the focus for my argument, that sees this possibility put into practice.

This part of my thesis will set out the practical template for my ideas as to the deliberate placement of some churches in strategic positions in Rome in the fourth and fifth centuries. The proposed theories as to the decisions behind the location of churches do not really touch on the practical application of this on the ground, and concentrate solely on the now dismissed house-church to formal basilica idea and parochial requirements. I contend that if we look at the actual processes behind all building projects of the period, an independent system for building churches, that allows for strategic thinking, emerges. All patrons, whether Christian or otherwise, naturally saw their new construction in the light of the whole urban landscape. What made the difference between a state-funded scheme and those led by the Church or the Emperor, was that the latter two could build where and when they wished for their own purposes and benefit, with public provision and need being secondary considerations. The emperor and, as I will suggest here, the Church, could potentially buy, or ask permission to buy, whatever land they wanted for their use. We will see in later chapters that there are good reasons to think that the Church did this on occasion. The objections to this view rely on the belief in existing or long-standing Christian ownership of the land on which a church was built, for which there is no reliable evidence. Similarly, cases where private land might have been donated to the church are very few. For our purposes here however, it will suffice to show how the Church was practically able to make the strategic decisions it took as to Church location, in order to better Christianise Rome and its population.

A large part of this chapter will be looking at restoration, a process that far outstripped new building projects by this time, outside the Christian sphere. This

probably had as much to do with lack of space as decreasing imperial interest in the city of Rome. Nevertheless, this phenomenon tells us much about pagan and civic priorities of the period, and can thus provide a valuable insight. I will not be discussing the legal issues involved in building projects, as this can be found elsewhere, and it would not serve my purpose in trying to unearth the people and processes involved in constructing and maintaining the buildings in Rome at this time.[1]

In the following pages, I will first discuss and describe the administrative and bureaucratic system that was in place to organise new building and restoration in the Rome of the fourth and fifth centuries. A specific examination of church, temple, and civic building projects that took place throughout the same period will succeed it. These sections will be subdivided into programmes undertaken by lay, clerical, 'papal', or imperial donors, public and privately-funded schemes, and projects using imperial, public and private money respectively. This will show that the widespread evidence there is for state funding of temple and civic building in Rome is not to be found for church construction, with Constantine and Theodosius I being the only imperial builders of churches. In this period, civic and temple building programmes are very rarely not funded by the state or imperial fisc, church building rarely is. This disparity is seen in the evidence. The difficult question as to whether a particular site could be chosen for a new church will then be tackled. The final section will consider the potential religious politics that may have influenced the decision-making behind the embellishment of already existing structures and new building in the city.

1.1. The Evolution of the Building Bureaucracy from Diocletian to Sixtus III

We will begin by examining the changes to the system in place for carrying out building and restoration in Rome, from the beginning of the fourth century to the middle of the fifth. The period begins with the main builder and initiator of projects in the city being the emperor, to a time when the main patron was the bishop of Rome. Financial provision, the founding of Constantinople, and a change in state religion all contributed

[1] For recent work on building law and a further bibliography see Saliou C., *Les lois des bâtiments : voisinage et habitat urbain dans l'empire romain ; recherches sur les rapports entre le droit et la construction privée du siècle d'Auguste au siècle de Justinien*; Malavé Osuna B., *Legislación urbanística en la Roma imperial : a propósito de una constitución de Zenón*; Lauriello G., *Insulae : abitare ai tempi di Cesare e di Augusto : aspetti giuridico-sanitari di vita quotidiana nei quartieri popolari di una città romana*, pp.53-90.

to this change. This story is one that is comprehensively covered in André Chastagnol's seminal work *La préfecture urbaine sous le bas-empire* that is now more than forty years old. As a result, I will merely summarise the evolution he describes but at the same time be critical of some of the conclusions he makes. Describing this era of change will allow the following discussion on the day-to-day running of the building and restoration bureaucracy to be seen in the right context. This is especially important when we examine the inscriptions that were fixed onto newly built or repaired structures, which describe those involved in the work. That is, does the appearance or absence of a particular post on these dedications show the demise of that position, or merely a change in epigraphic conventions?

The problem we face with this issue is that our main sources are these inscriptions, which commemorated the completion of a building or restoration scheme. We have to ask ourselves, do they represent a true picture of who was involved, or are they just an official stamp that was bound by convention? As we will see later, the variety and unconformity of the surviving examples we have for this period in Rome, suggest that they do indeed represent the real situation. However, conclusions made concerning minor posts in the administration, should be tempered by an acknowledgement of the politics of the time. The disappearance of certain posts from the epigraphic record during this period should be seen alongside the fact that these inscriptions were the only public manifestation of the prefect's power, and so have a propagandistic and political element. In this way, the omission of minor posts in the epigraphic record could be more about the prefect's wish to be seen as solely responsible for the city's upkeep, rather than a true reflection of the civil administration. In spite of this, the evidence they provide, combined with the legal sources we have, do point to a gradual centralisation of the bureaucracy during this period. Further, we have the *Liber Pontificalis*, an ecclesiastical source for church building, that appears biased in favour of the Roman bishop and his role in the Christian building projects of the period. However, the central role it gives him may not be fanciful, as we will see.

First though, in order to understand the system behind the various building and restoration projects in the Rome of this period, we need to be aware of the series of offices that were responsible for this aspect of the urban administration. We need to be clear what these posts were and the responsibilities attached to them. Documents, letters and inscriptions give us a basic idea as to what this structure was, and how it operated. Any great detail is, however, elusive. This system was first put together by Augustus,

more than three hundred years previously.[2] The best evidence for the name of the posts involved in the day-to-day running of the city of Rome in late antiquity is provided by the early fifth century document known as the *Notitia Dignitatum.* This document lists comprehensively the governmental and military posts throughout the empire, but it is incomplete and does at times refer back to an earlier bureaucracy.[3] Nevertheless, it is a good starting point and framework on which to base our discussion. The *Notitia* does not state the actual function and hierarchical placement of each office, but this can be deduced from the names themselves and their relative placement in the text. The text of the source is laid out as follows:

Insignia viri illustris praefecti urbis Romae.

Sub dispositione viri illustris praefecti urbis habentur amministrationes infrascriptae:

Praefectus annonae.

Praefectus vigilum.

Comes formarum.

Comes riparum et alvei Tiberis et cloacarum.

Comes portus.

Magister census.

Rationalis vinorum.

Tribunus forii suarii.

Consularis aquarum.

Curator operum maximorum.

Curator operum publicorum.

Curator statuarum.

Curator horreorum Galbanorum.

Centenarius portus.

Tribunus rerum nitentium.

Officium viri illustris praefecti urbis:

Princeps.

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[2] Suet. *Aug.* 37.

[3] Sinnigen, *The Officium of the Urban Prefecture during the Later Roman Empire*, p.8.

Cornicularius.

Adiutor.

Commentariensis.

Ab actis.

Numerarii.

Primiscrinius.

Subadiuuae.

Cura epistolarum.

Regrendarius.

Exceptores.

Adiutores.

Censuales.

Nomenculatores.

Singularii

What we can see from this text is that the different sub-sections of the urban government largely covered the daily running of the city. We could then assume from this that the Prefect of the City himself was merely overseeing and rubber-stamping many of the everyday decisions that needed to be taken. As our focus is building and restoration though, we will only be concentrating on the offices of *curator operum maximorum, curator operum publicorum* and *curator statuarum* listed above, and also the *curator aedium sacrarum* which existed earlier, as well as the office of Urban Prefect itself.

Broadly, we can divide the evolution of this system into three parts: the period up to 331; the period 331 to Gratian; and the period after him. This goes along with Chastagnol's assessment. Before 331 most of the *curatores* seem to have been largely independent, and it is only after this time that we can say that the Prefect controls this entire element of the administration, as demonstrated by the *Notitia* above.[4] This is implied by the inscriptions we have before this date that list these posts, without the prefect being mentioned, and their relative absence after that time, something that is

[4] Chastagnol, *La préfecture urbaine à Rome sous le Bas-Empire* pp.43-53.

especially evident with the offices that dealt with the buildings of the city.[5] What the inscriptions suggest is a more centralised regime after 331, which also coincides with the disappearance from the epigraphic record of the *curator/consularis aedium sacrarum*.[6] This does not necessarily mean the post also disappeared, and was subsumed by the *curator operum publicorum*, as Chastagnol suggests. Nonetheless, such a reform would go along with the religious mood of the period and a probable simplification of the system following the setting up of a new administration in Constantinople.[7] This meant that the care of the temples was now directly under the tutelage of the prefect, a reality certainly in place by 342, when the emperors write to the prefect concerning the need to keep intact those temples outside the walls of Rome.[8] Also, there are inscriptions showing prefects restoring pagan buildings in this period.[9] After 331 though, his powers do not seem to have extended to Christian monuments. Although no definitive proof survives, it may be the case that such buildings were treated as quasi-private structures, with the bishop and clergy in charge here but with funding from the imperial fisc.[10] Such a situation is assumed by the evidence from the *LP*, showing imperial donations and interventions for many foundations, but a lack of epigraphic evidence for such state provision. I would argue that for the majority of cases, the Church had control of the money as well. After the reforms of 331, nothing changed until Gratian, when he banned the use of state property to maintain the pagan cults in 382, and a loophole was closed in 384 when they could not receive legacies either.[11] This effectively cut off all state and other funds for the old religions, and affected the civil administration in Rome by removing all responsibility of the state for pagan temples and shrines. As such, this task was no longer a part of the prefect's remit, which is reflected in the inscriptions we have, where work on pagan buildings after this time is confined to perhaps two cases, both involving private money.

From now on the prefect had to concentrate purely on Christian buildings, which suggests they now became officially 'public' in legal terms. The first sign of this was with the reconstruction of the Constantinian S. Paolo Fuori le Mura in 383/4, after

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[5] Ibid, p. 45-6 & notes.
[6] It last appears in *CIL* XIV. 4449.
[7] Chastagnol, *Préfecture*, pp.52-3.
[8] *Cod. Theod.* XVI. 10.3 also XVI. 1.1 written in 365.
[9] See below 'Temple Building and Restoration'.
[10] Chastagnol, *Préfecture*, pp.140 & 147.
[11] Pronouncements of AD 382 & 384: Symmachus, *Rel.* 3.11-13,16; pronouncement of AD 382 - Ambrose, *Ep.* 17.3-5 and cited in *Cod. Theod.* XVI. 10.20 (AD 415).

Gratian had died, where the prefect, emperor, bishop and other clergy were all involved.[12] The public baptism and symbolic destruction of Mithraea and pagan statues by the prefect Gracchus in 376/7 could have been the initial signal of a change from an apparently religiously neutral prefecture to one where the position was actively pro-Christian, and at times positively anti-pagan.[13] It is no coincidence that Gracchus' own period in office coincided with Gratian's rise to the purple. This role in solely Christian building for the prefect continued into the fifth century, but with the decline in population of the city, so the post also declined in importance, along with the removal of some powers. From the inscriptions we have, this did not include the task of building or restoration however, now of course limited to Christian and municipal structures. The list of Urban Prefects ceases on the eve of the Gothic wars, after which the Church took over the entire administration, the future Pope Gregory holding the office in 572/3.[14]

Overall then, we can say the system before 331 was broadly a decentralised one, with specialised *curatores* in charge of certain projects. Between 331 up to the reign of Gratian, we see a centralised bureaucracy with the prefect overseeing everything and being ultimately in charge of all building and restoration projects that were pagan or civil in nature. After Gratian, the prefect only tackled Christian and civic programmes, with the pagan work no longer being state-funded. The fate of the *curatores* is unclear, but it is unlikely they disappeared overnight, if at all. We see them occasionally mentioned on inscriptions in Rome, but this infrequency after 331, and always beneath the prefect's name, implies their role was now rather junior and not entirely necessary.

1.2. The System in Practice

We now need to look at the evidence there is for the actual day-to-day running of this system, and if the reality bore any comparison to the official picture painted by the sources described above. In fact, the literary sources of the fourth century portray a more confused situation. In short, they describe a chaotic system where jobs overlap and where the prefect does not know what job is his, or what is the responsibility of his subordinates.

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[12] *Collectio Avellena* (ed. Günther) 3- see below.
[13] Prud. *Contra Symm.*, I. 5.561-5; Jerome, *Ep.* 107.2. Gracchus' actions seem rather exceptional though, and were probably as much about politics than religion.
[14] Sinnigen, *Urban Prefecture*, pp.112-4 & notes.

The main focus for our written record of the administrative system is the correspondences and letters of Quintus Aurelius Symmachus and his son Lucius. Within these we get a vivid picture of the daily management of Rome in this period. Quintus writes from the point of view of the prefect of the city, the office he held in 384. At this time he wrote his correspondences to the emperor, known as the *relationes*, and it is from these which we will first quote. As we have seen, the post of prefect evolved in its role and power throughout the fourth century, so as such, Symmachus' experience in the office may not be typical of the entire period. Nevertheless, the position was never changed radically thereafter, so represents the situation through to the fifth century and beyond.

There are three examples in particular of the elder Symmachus' letters to the emperors that illustrate the problems inherent in the system at the time, and the underlying confusion within it. Significantly, this is the period just after Gratian's reforms, which meant the prefect no longer had anything to do with pagan buildings. The immediate ramifications may have led to much of the confusion Symmachus describes, he himself being a committed pagan. The first of these concerns Symmachus' statement that the officials under him in the administration were incompetent and not of sufficient quality.

"habet temporum felicitas digniores; bonorum virorum vena fecunda est. melius urbi vestrae in posterum consuletis, si legatis invitos."[15]

This is a rather risky statement to give to the emperors, as it was they, albeit indirectly, who appointed such individuals. This does however show the desperation that Symmachus felt, and the lengths he was willing to go to in order to rectify matters. Further, with this current staff, he may have felt they would inhibit his ability to do a competent and successful job, which could in turn reflect badly on his career and damage that of his son's. Whatever the case, this situation highlights the flaw of appointments made through familial connections and court favour rather than ability. This was not a problem unique to the governance of the city of Rome. This is not to say a meritocratic system did not exist, but it did at times play second place. In these situations as Symmachus points out:

[15] Symm. *Rel.* 17.2.

"meis quippe umeris rerum omnium pondera sustinentur cedentibus reliquis..."[16]

All these problems stem from the empire-wide issue of the increasingly burdensome task of office that many of the upper classes were now unwilling to take on. This may explain Symmachus' suggestion to appoint the best men *si legatis invitos.*

1.2.1. An Imperial Building Contract in Late Antiquity: The reconstruction of the *pons Probi* and the re-building of the Basilica to St. Paul

Another useful correspondence suggests the lack of authority the Prefecture had by this stage in matters fiscal and legal.[17] However, for our purposes which concern building and the role of the administration in this, I will focus on two other *relationes*, numbers 25 and 26. They both describe the situation surrounding the construction, collapse and repair of the *pons Theodosii* which seems to have been a replacement for the *pons Probi.*[18] Along with this project, there stood alongside it the enlargement of St. Paul's, an imperially funded church to be situated approximately one mile outside the walls on the *Via Ostiensis*. The two, as Symmachus suggests, made up the one contract, of which significantly the prefect was now in charge, that is now in charge of the construction of a Christian building.[19] These letters tell us something about the process, problems and people involved in an imperially led building project however, the prefect was only leading the work on the ground. It will be argued that most church building comes under the 'private' sphere, but only in the sense that it is not the emperor or prefect in control.[20] That is, the funding may not always have originated from the Church's own coffers, but for the construction of the smaller *tituli*, there is every reason to think that it did. In many ways, the Church, even by this early date, could be

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[16] Symm. *Rel.* 17.2.
[17] Symm. *Rel.* 23 *passim.*
[18] Therefore built or began by the emperor Probus (AD 276-82). This was the bridge which lay south-west of the Circus Maximus and led to the *Transtiberim*, the modern Trastevere region. It is mentioned in the regionary lists the *Notitia./Curiosum.* Pontes – Nordh A., *Libellus de Regionibus Urbis Romae*, p.98.13. Incidentally, it led onto the street which, by Symmachus' time, contained some sort of Christian centre dedicated to Saint Cecilia - *LTUR* I. 206-7. The possible significance of this will be dealt with later in the chapter.
[19] Symm. *Rel.* 25.2; see also Symm. *Ep.* 4.70 & 5.76.
[20] Being religious buildings this would be unsurprising; temples, shrines and the land on which they stood were always regarded as *rei privatae.*

described as a state within a state, with the bishops being the local 'emperors'. In this way, the process by which the Church went about building for itself may not have been that different, in the fiscal and organisational sense, from the state, with the individuals in charge also having largely the same roles as those in the public sphere.

As such, the process broadly described by Symmachus over the matter of the bridge, could be a parallel to the Church's own building organisation. Indeed, they may also have used the same state architects and surveyors, it being so favoured by the imperial government. The only difference may have been that projects were initiated by the bishop of Rome, a priest or a private individual rather than the emperor. In the matter of the bridge, Symmachus describes how the responsibility for the building work was given to a Cyriades and then an Auxentius, the former at least described as a *mechanicae professor*, the best translation for which is a 'specialist engineer'.[21] The fact that the person in charge of a project moved on before it was finished is strange, especially considering his expertise. Symmachus does not give any reason for this and evidently sees the situation as not unusual, so we must assume this commonly occurred. Nevertheless, it was Cyriades and Auxentius who were in charge of the finances, and had access to a central imperial fund on which they could freely draw for the costs of labour and materials.[22] The dispute centred on the amount of money Cyriades took, which was criticised by his successor Auxentius, and the former's alleged poor workmanship, exposed when the bridge collapsed during the winter of 382.[23] Symmachus as prefect set up an enquiry:

"...super basilicae atque pontis immodico sumptu Auxentii v.c. voce perstrictus est, quem Cyriades vir parilis dignitatis mutua accusatione credidit remordendum. Visum est igitur adcommodum, ut utriusque aedificationem fida aestimaret inspectio."[24]

Auxentius was then accused of abandoning the work, presumably of the basilica as well as the bridge, which indicates that position's overall control of the project and not just with its finances. Symmachus also makes it clear that such appointments were

[21] Symm. *Rel.* 25.1.
[22] Amm. Marc. XXVII.3.10; the tax on wine, the *arca vinaria*, paid for mortar- *Cod. Theod.* XIV.6.3 (365).
[23] Symm. *Rel.* 26.4.
[24] Ibid.25.2.

made by the emperor.[25] He also shows how the prefect at the time had little knowledge and influence with regard the building operations themselves, when he asks about how the costs are calculated. Although personal knowledge of such matters may have varied depending on the prefect involved, it certainly seems that the individual in charge of an imperial project at least, was independent of the prefect's office. This also shows that by this time the control of imperial building operations, were not controlled centrally but rather individually, project by project in a rather ad-hoc fashion. In other words there was a lot of delegation of duties down the line, with the emperor and Prefect of the City purely official figure heads, but with very little actual role in the work itself. Thus with an imperial project, the emperor, either using his own money or that from the central fisc, organised who was doing what independently from the prefect. In the prefect's own work, using his civic funds, it is more likely he had far more control and say on matters. It does show however, that there was no universally agreed system for building and restoration but rather a series of pragmatic arrangements that were formulated to suit a specific project.

Further, if as Symmachus suggests, whoever was in charge of the bridge was also in charge of the basilica, that is St. Paul's, the inscriptions from this period concerning that church show how useful, but also misleading, they can be as compared to the reality. Our knowledge of this church's enlargement in the late fourth century is uniquely detailed as we have a letter from the emperors to the Prefect of the City concerning its construction, as well as inscriptions commemorating its completion.[26] Within the former, architects are also mentioned, and so such individuals were employed from above for both civic and Christian buildings in imperial projects, but there is no reason to think that Church-led schemes could not have employed the same people. The inscriptions from St. Paul's show us the people involved, even the administrators –probably the *curatores*- in one instance. Inevitably, there is bound to be some simplification in these inscriptions and this should be borne in mind when we examine other examples later.

As we have said, most churches were not built through imperial channels so the letter concerning St. Paul's we have is more informative about general emperor-led schemes of this period than specifically Christian ones. However, the fact that this is a

[25] Ibid.25.2 & 3.
[26] *Coll. Avell.*, 3; *ILCV* I. 1761, 1857; *LTS* IV.170-1.

Christian construction, may give us a clue as to what was expected in such projects. It is argued, for example, that the decision to enlarge Saint Paul's was initiated by the bishop Damasus (366-84), who may have influenced the emperors through Ambrose, as part of a policy to counteract the growing pagan influence in the 380s.[27] As we will see though, Damasus was perfectly capable of carrying out building projects himself, so this would seem out of character. Nonetheless, the size and nature of the work may have required imperial involvement.

The letter informs us of the chain of authority in this imperial scheme. The emperors write to the Prefect of the city, a Sallust.[28] He was, in turn, ordered to organise the surveying of the chosen site – over the former Constantinian church – so as they can order the necessary materials:

"...quod ad inspicienda universa, ut res exigebat, detulisti et omnem situm locorumque faciem sermonis congrui diligentia nostrae serenitatis auribus intimasti. Instructiones enim nos iubere decuit, quae iubenda sunt."[29]

Sallust is then told to:

"...examine cum venerabili sacerdote..."[30]

which we can assume is the bishop of Rome, in this case probably Damasus, who died in the December of 384.[31] This assumes he was not consulted before, but that he may have been able to have had some impact on the construction process, albeit after a site was chosen and the decision to actually build it had been made. The fact that the leading Christian official in the city should be involved in a project concerning the enlargement of a Christian place of worship is perhaps not surprising. However, this was an imperial project and could show how the bishop now wielded a degree of influence and importance, within Rome, by this time. It may also indicate the bishop was generally

[27] R. Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals*, p. 104. The so-called 'Pagan revival' is also unproven.
[28] This is *Sallustius Aventius* and dates the letter to 383/4- Chastagnol, *Les Fastes*, pp. 216-7. Cf. *PLRE* I. Sallustius 4. He was a pagan which suggests that in imperial projects religious affiliation was not a factor. This is not surprising, one had to follow the emperor's orders. With Church-led schemes such an issue may have proved a problem though- we will discuss such a potential situation later.
[29] *Coll. Avell.* 3.1.
[30] Ibid, 3.2.
[31] *LP* I. 213.

consulted before such projects took place. In this imperially funded example, the bishop was the second rung down in the consultative process, with perhaps only an influence on the layout and design of the church. In other more typically church-led ventures, his role seems to have been more senior, at least according to the *LP* and the inscriptions in churches describing their completion.

Nevertheless, the significance of the role of the bishop is highlighted by the fact that the senate and the Christian people are only

"...participato..."[32]

in this process. A referral to the senate may have been typical or necessary for imperial constructions in the city, but the reference to the Christian people could have the meaning of priests, although a general announcement in the forum is likely. This latter act would have emphasised the popular and propagandist value of any imperial work, in this case a church. Notwithstanding, this whole process, as described in the letter, clearly delineates where the decision making lay and what the role of each layer of authority had in a Christian construction of this period under imperial patronage. Indeed the account of the construction of a church at Gaza, probably in 402, further indicates the central role the bishop played in such projects. In this case, having free reign on the precise positioning of the church and the funds required to build it.[33]

In a private church-building project, that is with no emperor at the top overseeing matters, the next layer down and therefore the individual most likely to be in charge, was the bishop. The prefect could still have been involved perhaps, but as only an intermediary, as with the imperial scheme just discussed. The only sources we have for any details behind such private programmes are the *Liber Pontificalis*, and the various inscriptions associated with the completed church. These, and what they indicate, will be discussed in due course, but in order to provide some context for our problem, it would be worthwhile to look at the role of the fourth and fifth century bishop. We can judge from this then what may be expected from the bishop of Rome at this time, and so evaluate our sources in this light.

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[32] *Coll. Avell.* 3.2.
[33] Mark the Deacon, *Life of Porphyry*, (trans. Hill G.F.) 43, 45, 53.

1.2.2. The Role of a Bishop in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries

The bishopric of Rome in the first two centuries after the Church's imperial acceptance was still trying to gain the pre-eminence it would later achieve. As such we can still regard it as on an equal footing with the other sees at this time. That is, its power and its role were the same as any other bishop, within its city and diocese. Modern views of the role of the bishopric as an institution have subtly varied, from a purely spiritual position that was then corrupted by Constantine's policy of favouring the clergy, to one where he is seen as a political representative of cities that were becoming increasingly controlled from above.[34] More recent scholarship has sought to integrate the spiritual and secular responsibilities of the post, thus viewing the bishopric as becoming a privileged, civil, quasi-governmental position from Constantine, yet still generally removed from the empire's administration.[35] In fact, it is argued that many of the supposedly new responsibilities and benefits that the episcopate enjoyed were actually merely the putting in place of privileges given to priests of other religions and the evolution of existing ecclesiastical practices.[36] In any case, the office of bishop gradually gained a power and prestige that eventually made it a desirable post for those that would otherwise have chosen a political career, in an attempt to retain or gain some notoriety and influence for themselves and their family. The holy man as a *patronus*, first described by Peter Brown, was a natural evolution in role for those from leading families entering the episcopate.[37] The bishop's authority derived from this, but meant his role as patron went beyond earthly provisions such as food and building, into providing spiritual succour. What distinguished the bishop from the general Christian holy man was the access to wealth, which in the Roman patronal system was a crucial tool for gaining and wielding influence and power. It was the combination of this money and spiritual authority that meant a bishop was soon to become a very powerful individual within their sphere of influence. Men with private wealth already seem to have had a greater chance of rising to the episcopate; the many reported cases of simony

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[34] Klauser T., *Der Ursprung der bischöflichen Insignien und Ehrenrecht*; Brown P.L.R., *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire.*

[35] Chadwick H., 'Bishops and Monks', *Studia Patristica* 24 (1993), pp.45-61; Sterk A., *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church: The Monk-Bishop in Late Antiquity.*

[36] Rapp C., *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity*, pp. 235-73.

[37] Brown P.L.R., 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity', *JRS* 61 (1971), pp.80-101.

may explain this.[38] We can see the degree to which the bishopric of Rome was coveted, by the violent pursuit of the position in 366 between Damasus and Ursinus.[39] The famous sarcastic statement said to have been made by the well-known pagan Praetextatus, concerning the position, is equally revealing.[40]

The bishop, as well as being able to use his personal wealth to enhance his own local or more widespread prestige, naturally had access to the Church's money. This was augmented by voluntary contributions or one-off donations from private individuals, as well as, in the case of Rome and some other bishoprics, imperial gifts of money or land, a phenomenon described above. It was this wealth and their position within the city that put the bishops on a par with the leading prominent citizens, which in Rome were the senatorial families. As such, the role of the bishop would have had similar expectations on it, a major element of this being new building or embellishment of the city's physical landscape.[41]

As we have already seen, the *episcopus* acted as the conduit between the emperor and the state in imperially funded church building projects. There is also plenty of evidence that shows the bishop himself initiating and funding the construction of churches. This was presumably seen as an expected activity for him to undertake, just as the provision of games or the construction or restoration of a public building was expected from the emperor or a leading local personage. For Rome, the evidence for the bishop's activity comes from the *Liber Pontificalis* and the inscriptions from the churches in question. Although the *LP* should not be seen as especially accurate for the fourth and fifth centuries, the fact that some listed 'papal' foundations can be correlated with similarly worded inscriptions, and that imperial or privately funded examples are distinguished from them, can encourage us to think that churches constructed purely on the bishop's behest did exist. It is also apparent that in a world where polytheistic worship was still practised, and was a notable feature on the landscape still in many cities, especially Rome, an increased visual presence of Christianity would have reflected well on a bishop who had initiated such a programme. This building role was therefore a curious mix of Christian evangelism and local civic expectation.[42]

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[38] Rapp C., *Holy Bishops*, pp.199-203, 211-2 with notes.
[39] Amm. Marc. XXVII.3.12-13.
[40] Jerome, *Contra Joannem Hierosolymitanum* 8: "*Miserabilis ille Praetextatus, qui designatus consul est mortuus, homo sacrilegus et idolorum cultor, solebat ludens beato papae Damaso dicere: 'Facite me Romanae urbis episcopum, et ero protinus Christianus.*' "
[41] Rapp, *Holy Bishops*, pp.215-6, 220-3.
[42] Rapp, *Holy Bishops*, p.223.

This is most obviously expressed in the building activity of the bishop of Nola, Paulinus, in the early fifth century. It is obvious from one of Paulinus' letters to his friend Sulpicius Severus in 403/4, that a bishop was capable of having direct control over the location and design of a church. Paulinus describes the building of a basilica to the local saint, Felix, just to the north of Nola, that was deliberately located and designed so as to have a strong relationship with the nearby Church of the Apostles. This was in order to increase the prestige of Felix, and to increase the popularity of his cult.[43] The use of location in this way can, I would argue, be seen in many of the churches in Rome, and this example, although from a rural area, does show that such a strategy was possible and was actually carried out.

On a similar but more localised scale within Rome, individual priests could also be involved in building a church, as could a private individual. Christian building is more difficult to assign as public or private, as the Church as an institution was imperially favoured, and no doubt used imperial money in certain projects even though the bishop or certain priests may have been officially in charge. It has been suggested that early intra-mural church building in Rome was private in nature because these churches were named after individuals and places, which included the ostensibly 'public' Lateran basilica or *Basilica Constantiniana*.[44] A contemporary discussion of Christian attitudes towards private property can be seen in Ambrose, but is one coloured by religious rhetoric rather than legal reality. Ambrose speaks against the desire for private property as something that goes against a natural *iustitia*, and describes how God created the earth and everything in it as common property to everyone.[45] He is not against private property in principle however, as long as it is used for the benefit of others, for example in his own use of it to free prisoners of war after Hadrianople in 378.[46] More specifically, the bishop of Milan writes about an attempt by the emperor in 385 to seize a church for the Arians in the city. Ambrose's response is to argue the

[43] Paulinus, *Ep.* 32.13-15, *Carmen* 27.370-1; Goldschmidt R.C., *Paulinus' Churches at Nola*, pp.17, 19-20.
[44] Brandt O., 'Constantine, the Lateran, and Early Church Building Policy' in Rasmus Brandt J. & Steen O. (eds.), *Imperial Art as Christian Art, Christian Art as Imperial Art : Expression and Meaning in Art and Architecture from Constantine to Justinian*, pp. 109-14.
[45] Ambrose, *De Off.* I.28, *De Viduis*, I.5.
[46] Ambrose, *In Psalm* 118.8.22, *De Off.* II.28; see also Swift L.J. '*Iustitia* and *Ius Privatum*: Ambrose on Private Property', *American Journal of Philology* 100 (1979), pp.176-87 which includes a further bibliography on the issue.

basilica does not belong to him but to God, and so it is not his to give away.[47] What is the case is that the imperial authorities and the Arians saw it as property of the bishop, and Ambrose's argument does seem like a rhetorical flourish. Indeed, the bishop's comparison of the church with a private house is telling.[48] In this way, we can argue that churches were generally regarded as private property. As such, for our purposes, patronage towards them can more easily be divided up into imperial, bishop-led and those schemes begun through clerical or lay donations. There does appear to have been a differentiation made between public and private churches in the East at least, whatever that may have meant in practice.[49]

1.3. Case Studies

1.3.1. Christian Building

To illustrate this point we will now look briefly at some examples from Rome of these types of constructions and how such projects were practically administered. Our evidence here is very fragmentary and relies mainly on the few surviving or recorded inscriptions of this period from churches as well as the sixth century *Liber Pontificalis*.

Lay Patronage

In the fourth century there is no evidence for any lay donor providing the money for actually building a church, but we do have evidence for them decorating a building associated with one, and a woman founding a sickhouse.[50] There is no detail attached to any of these cases so no more can be said, except the fact that women were prominently involved, which vindicates Jerome's picture of Christian Rome. The characterisation of Damasus by his enemies as the 'ear-tickler of matrons', *matronarum auriscalpius*, reinforces this, as well as an imperial prescript of 370 addressed to him not allowing

[47] Ambrose, *Ep.*XX, *Contra Aux.* 5, 35.
[48] Ambrose, *Ep.*XX.19.
[49] *Cod. Theod.* XVI.5.14.
[50] Anastasia and her husband decorating a building next to St. Peter's (*ICUR* (NS) II.4097 (366-84 AD)) & Fabiola establishing a *nosocomion* in the late fourth century in the city: "*Et primo omnium νοσοκομείον instituit...*"(Jerome, *Ep.* LXXVII.6). An Asella may also have created a hermitage in the centre of Rome, although this may have been more of a metaphorical foundation – Jerome, *Ep.* XXIV.4.

clergy to approach widows and orphans for material benefit, which effectively cut off much private patronage towards the church.[51] Whether this law reflects the real picture in Rome and elsewhere or the undue influence of Damasus' critics on the emperors who wrote to the bishop, is open to debate. Our sources tell us there was certainly some female lay patronage towards the church. The model Jerome and others create of this patronage is of interest here. It has been assumed that the majority of early Christian building was possible because of donors such as these, the female names of the early *tituli* in Rome being evidence of this, it is thought.[52] What is interesting to note, however, is that the lay foundations of the fourth and fifth centuries that we know about from literary or epigraphic sources, rarely show evidence for the lay foundation of churches, merely their decoration, or embellishment in other ways. The vast majority of Christian buildings created in this way do seem to have been through aristocratic female patronage, but were in the form of sick or poor-houses, *xenodochia*, nunneries or monasteries.[53] It is strange so few churches appear to have been built by lay donors, as a lack of money cannot have been an obstacle for this group of people. This may have been due to the law of 370, with Christian private patrons looking for more indirect ways of helping the Church. However, the answer, I think, lies in a letter by Jerome to the widow Demetrias. In this, Jerome states that she should not be building churches and richly decorating them, but rather caring for the poor and hungry and managing the communities of virgins and other Christians.[54] With Jerome being the catalyst for the ascetic movement from the late fourth century, and with him being the mentor for all the members of it, it is likely such advice meant these rich widows, and the men associated with them, took this advice to heart. This could explain the lack of patronage of churches by this group, and the abundant funding of more benevolent projects. In another letter, Jerome also states that monks, nuns, hermits and ascetics should be

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[51] *Coll. Avell.* 1.9-10; Amm. Marc. XXVII.3.14; *Cod. Theod.* XVI.2.20 with Ambrose *Ep.* XVIII.13-14.
[52] Pietri C., *Roma christiana. Recherches sur l'Eglise de Rome, son organisation, sa politique, son idéologie de Miltiade à Sixte III (311-440)*, pp. 90-96, 569-573 with the bishop as ultimate owner of the property; Llewellyn P.A.B, "The Roman Church during the Laurentian Schism: Priests and Senators", *Church History* 45 (1976), pp.417-427, Idem, 'The Roman Clergy during the Laurentian Schism (498-506): A Preliminary Analysis', *Ancient Society* 8 (1977), pp.245-75 with *collegia* of priests as owners.
[53] See n.50 with Jerome, *Ep.* LXVI.11 & LXXVII.10, CVIII.20, CXVIII.5; Gerontius, *Vita S. Melaniae Junioris*, 20, 22, 41, 48, 49, 57; Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca*, 46, 54; Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* XXIX.10. However, the Church of the Ascension in Jerusalem was probably constructed in the 380s by a Poemenia – Clark E.A., *The Life of Melania, the Younger*, p.115 n.5 for refs. Melania's and her husband Pinian's rich mansion in Rome has been found on the Caelian Hill, but there is no literary or archaeological evidence for it being a place of Christian worship, something that would surely have been mentioned by Gerontius (Gerontius, *Vita*, 14; Clark, *Life of Melania*, pp.97-9).
[54] Jerome, *Ep.* CXXX.14.

regarded as a different category from bishops and clergy, who should be in the cities providing for their flocks.[55] All this tends to suggest that it was the clergy's role to provide churches for a city, and that other charitable buildings should be created by devout members of the lay community. That is not to say lay donors did not give money directly to the Church authorities, although this may have decreased after 370, but this is money *used* by the bishops and clergy to buy land or convert a building for Christian use. I am suggesting that lay property or land was not, or very rarely, given to the ecclesiastical authorities of the city for church construction. Most private money was directed elsewhere towards charitable buildings and monasteries and in repairs and embellishment of already existing churches. The frequent female names that appear as the names of churches in the 499 synod list can be explained in other ways.[56]

The more typical forms of lay patronage can be seen in the other examples from Rome that we have. The following case comes from the early fifth century, and is the second recorded example, after St. Paul's, of the Urban Prefect being involved in the building of a Christian structure, in this case a baptistery rather than a church. This is nevertheless a further example of the prefect's increasing involvement in Christian building, as he is now not just supervising a Christian project but overseeing it completely, and perhaps initiating it.[57] This is a sign of such patronage being accepted by this time as a legitimate form of public munificence, as well as an acknowledged part of the prefect's job. Further examples of prefectural activity in this sphere throughout the fifth and sixth century reiterate this point.[58] The Urban Prefect's infrequent involvement in Christian patronage could be more to do with the quasi-private nature of such building rather than any disinterest on their part. The examples we do have of their involvement in Christian construction, may therefore indicate a particular wish to be publicly associated with such a project, and therefore publish their religious affiliation.[59] All this implies that for these Christian building projects, the full mechanisms of civil government were used in the actual construction or embellishment processes. We must assume therefore that the money to pay for these came out of the taxes of the inhabitants

[55] Jerome, *Ep.* LVIII.4-5.
[56] There is no reason to think these names were those of founders, and those that might be are likely to be clerical eg. the *titulus Marci*: Hillner J., 'Clerics, Property and Patronage: The Case of the Roman Titular Churches', *Antiquité tardive* 14 (2006), pp.59-68.
[57] *ICUR* II.150 n.19, *PLRE* II. Longinianus. The inscription was found near S. Anastasia.
[58] *CIL* VI. 1666, 1668, 1762.
[59] In the same way as the Urban Prefect Praetextatus in 367/8 put his name with the inscription recording the restoration of the *Porticus Deorum Consentium*. This will be discussed later.

of Rome. What is more significant though is that the vast majority of Christian building, of which there was much in this period in Rome, did not include the prefect, at least not officially. Considering the prefect's role, after 382, was confined to Christian and municipal buildings, this again suggests church construction was relatively independent from the state.

The next example we have of a similar donation is fifty or so years later by a Gallus. He provided the money for the decoration of part of St. Peter's. His identification as a former Urban Prefect is uncertain.[60] The best-documented example, however, of a lay patron who is actually central to the building of a church, comes from the early fifth century. Here, a Vestina provides the money for the construction of *SS. Gervasius et Protasius*, now S.Vitale. She is mentioned in the *Liber Pontificalis*, and is the first case of a private donor appearing in this way there. Whether this is then the beginning of a new phase in Christian building in Rome, as it has been seen, or rather the first time the *Liber Pontificalis'* ad hoc early writers see fit to mention such people, we cannot say. Nevertheless, the detail it provides is of some help to us. The relevant text is within the life of Innocent I (401/2-417):

Eadem tempore dedicavit basilicam sanctorum Gervasi et Protasi ex devotione cuiusdam inlustris feminae Vestinae, laborantibus presbiteris Ursicino et Leopardo et diacono Liviano. Quae feminae suprascripta testamenti paginam sic ordinavit ut basilica sanctorum martyrum ex ornamentis et margaritis construeretur, venditis iustris extimationibus"[61]

The significant part of this excerpt is that it implies rather than specifically donating land to the Church on which to build, she instead merely gives jewellery as a donation. This is then for Bishop Innocent to sell, to pay for the church and presumably to purchase the land onto which he wants to build. No house, building or piece of land is mentioned as being provided for the purpose.[62] In this way, the Roman Church had control over the resources for the building's construction. The other extant examples of

[60] A former *p.u.* if *PLRE* II. Gallus 3 is him; *ICUR* II.148 n.15.
[61] *LP*. I. 220.
[62] A similar situation occurs under Simplicius (468-83), when the Goth Valila leaves the Basilica Of Junius Bassus in his will to the Church, as well as money to convert it into a Christian centre (S. Andrea in Catabarbara). Once more it is the bishop who carries this out, but in this instance the land on which to build the church (the site of the basilica) *is* provided by the donor.– *ICUR* II. 436 n.115; *LP* I.249. Importantly, this is mentioned in the inscription. This example will be discussed more later.

private lay donations up to the end of the fifth century, come mainly in the form of embellishment of existing churches.[63] The arrangement with S. Stefano in Via Latina is the same as S. Vitale. The private donor, in this case Demetria Anicia, provided the money for the Church, but the presbyter Tigrinus was actually in charge of the construction work. With the other lay builders it is not clear who is in charge of the actual construction. With these private donations, it would be dangerous to generalise that any specific arrangement or system for construction applied in all cases. Some donors may indeed have provided land, as with Valila, or wished to be more directly involved in the process than others. Nevertheless it is highly probable that the Church had some role in all the examples, but it is likely this varied.

Another similar example to S. Vitale and S. Andrea may be S. Pudenziana, where the scenario of a lay donor and clerical founder could be recurring. Here the evidence is less certain, but it appears the owner of the building on the site before the church was built, gave the structure to be converted into a Christian centre, as Valila was to do with the basilica of Junius Bassus. Brick stamps bearing the name Quintus Servilius Pudens, consul in 166, were found in the church's masonry, suggesting a later ancestor of his donated the family's property to the Church, which explains the name of the later ecclesiastical building.[64] An inscription found in the Christian basilica (see below) confirms the role taken by the Church in its construction. The rarity of this sort of patronage in the written and epigraphic record, these three cases are the only known possibilities, only serves to indicate how unusual it was to donate land or a building in Rome for a church, both being extremely valuable, and usually containing the family home.

Clerical Building Managers or Founders

With Vestina and Demetria Anicia however, we do hear of priests being given a leading role in the construction of the church, which in turn may indicate an interesting

[63] Flavius Constantius Felix and wife Padusia decorate the apse in S. Giovanni in Laterano in 428/30 (*ICUR* II.149 n.17); Marinianus (*PLRE* II, Marinianus 3) and wife Anastasia decorate the façade of St. Peter's some time between 440-61 (*ICUR* II.55 n.10); Attica wife of Magnus Felix (*PLRE* II, Felix 21) builds a chapel next to S. Lorenzo in Damaso in the mid to late fifth century (*ICUR*. II. 151 n.25). Two more substantive donors were Demetria Anicia, who provided the money for S. Stefano in Via Latina outside the walls between 440-61 (*LP*. I.238, *ILCV* 1765), and the *magister militum* Ricimer, who builds S. Agatha dei Goti in 459 or 470 (*ICUR* II. 438 n.127).

[64] Petrignani A., *La basilica di S. Pudenziana*, p.25 with plate I.

arrangement that seems to apply elsewhere. From the text above we see the appearance of three clerics being given the role of supervising the construction of Vestina's church, which on its own implies that the Church authorities were intimately involved in this case. These individuals would be of little interest on their own except for the fact that they appear to be involved in several other church constructions of this period. For example, the priest Leopardus appears again along with a Maximus and Ilicius in the inscriptions commemorating the building and decoration of S. Pudenziana in the late fourth or early fifth centuries:

FUND(ATA) A LEOPARDO ET ICILO VALENT AUG ET EUTYCIANO COS

(*ILCV* 1772A)

SALVO SIRICIO EPISC ECLESIAE SANCTAE ET ILICIO LEOPARDO ET MAXIMO PRESBBB

(*ILCV* 1772B)

MAXIMUS FECIT CUM SUIS

(*ILCV* 1773A)[65]

Ilicius appears again building something at the shrine of St. Hippolytus:

OMNIA QUAE VIDENTUR A MEMORIA SANCTI MARTYRIS YPPOLITI USQUE HUC SURGERE TECTA ILICIUS PRESB SUMTU PROPRIO FECIT

(*ILCV* 1773)

And similarly Leopardus, who decorates S. Lorenzo Fuori le Mura:

SUCCEDUNT MELIORA SIBI MIRANDA TUENTI QUAE LEOPARDI LABOR CURA ET VIGILANTIA FEC(IT)...

(*ICUR* II.155 n.3)

All this may suggest, as Krautheimer also proposes, that these priests, especially Leopardus and Ilicius, were part of some sort of 'papal' building committee whose particular job was to lead the building projects of this period, under Siricius, Anastasius and Innocent I.[66] Indeed it would not be too fanciful to suggest that such a committee had existed for many years, perhaps founded under Damasus, when the first wave of

[65] For a discussion on the various complexities surrounding the building of the church see *CBCR* III.299-300, *LTUR* IV. 166-8. The church is no longer universally thought to have been a former bathhouse. It is now believed by some to have been installed in the courtyard of a house with fountains- Brandenburg H., *Ancient Churches of Rome from the Fourth to the Seventh Century*, p.138.

[66] *CBCR* III. 302.

extensive bishop-led Christian building took place. The *LP* however suggests that priests were capable of constructing their own churches independently and buying the land around them before 355, with Felix II, when he was still a priest, doing exactly this.[67] The first definitive foundation of a church by a priest though is not until the mid-fifth century when a Peter builds S. Sabina under the pontificate of Celestine (422-32).[68]

There are of course inscriptions where a group of clerics are not mentioned in reference to a new construction or restoration, but this may not mean they were not involved. The appearance of the bishop in such inscriptions could imply their involvement on its own, he himself likely to have been the head of any building committee if one existed. It may have been an epigraphic affectation as to whether the whole committee was mentioned or just the bishop. This is just a theory of course, but it suggests a formal organisation that specifically managed Christian building programmes, and that had a large amount of autonomy and independence from the imperial and state bureaucracy. In other words, the frequent mentioning of the Roman bishop on inscriptions is not a deceit, but rather a reflection of the reality of his and several priests' central involvement in the construction in question.

Patronage by the Bishop

This form of patronage, according to our main source for Christian building in Rome, the *Liber Pontificalis*, was the most common way a church was built in the city. The veracity of this source does need to be questioned, especially when it refers to periods before it was systematically added to from the sixth century. However, the picture the *LP* portrays of a church building programme initiated largely by the bishop of Rome, does not seem improbable, such munificence being likely to have been part of the *exspectationes* for such a position, in the same way as games were for the aristocracy. Where the funding itself came from is not always obvious though. The terms the *LP* uses after the bishop's name such as *construit* seems to imply they were the Church's own funds, or perhaps from the bishop's personal wealth. There are many churches that are claimed to be built by a particular bishop, but for our purposes here we will focus on those examples where we have some written evidence as well as

[67] *LP*. I.211.
[68] *ILCV* 1778a -a large mosaic inscription in the church that describes its founder and date. Not completed until the time of Sixtus III? (432-40)- *LP* I.235.

inscriptional proof that backs this up. There are only two of these for the period up to the death of Sixtus III; the construction of the first church of S. Lorenzo in Damaso by Damasus in the mid-fourth century, and the building of S. Maria Maggiore by Sixtus III in the mid-fifth.

Damasus' foundation is recorded in the *LP* as to St. Lawrence *iuxta theatrum*, and uses *fecit* when referring to his activity.[69] This could be translated as 'built', but could also mean 'created' or 'made'. Such a differentiation becomes significant when we look at one of the inscriptions that was placed inside the church, which survives because it was copied down in the ninth century. It states that Damasus' father, but more likely Damasus himself, rose from *exceptor* to priest here, and may have lived in this place when he was elected pope. This, combined with the statement that he built an archive on this spot and added some columns, implies a pre-existing building being modified, rather than an entirely new one being 'built'.[70] This rather detailed and informative inscription is at odds with the brief and formalised inscriptions by prefects or emperors, placed on the outside of buildings. The difference probably lies in that the latter are speaking to the whole urban population, whereas Damasus' text, and most other Christian inscriptions it seems, only address the Christian community, being sited inside churches. For our purposes, what seems clear is that Damasus does not produce *ex novo* a purpose-built church, but rather modifies an already existing structure, probably a house, for Christian worship. I should add here that this does not mean it was already a long-standing Christian centre and therefore an example of the *domus ecclesia* to *ecclesia* theory. Such modifications were extremely likely in such a built up city where open land in prime spots was rare, so the acquisition of houses or *insulae* for modification was necessary. This process was probably the rule for the fourth-century bishops, and in this case Damasus seems in charge of the operation and the money used for it.

The other bishop-led project we can examine was certainly a new build, and seems to be a replacement for the so-called Liberian Basilica, built or created by Liberius more than seventy years previously. This new church, now known as S. Maria Maggiore, has structural remains no earlier than the fifth century underneath it, and so may lie just to the north of Liberius' foundation. The *LP* seems confused here then

[69] *LP*. I.212.
[70] *ICUR* II. 135. n.7, 151. n.23; *CBCR* II. 145-8; *LTUR* III. 180.

where it suggests the two buildings are the same. Parts of a house still in use in the fourth century have been found under the church, where an illustrated calendar was discovered, but there is no evidence to suggest this was ever an earlier Christian centre. This major building programme, which was likely to have been headed by Sixtus himself, could therefore represent a large step forward in 'papal' building.[71] The two inscriptions from the original church that we have copies of, also enlightens us, in that they emphasise the centrality given to the bishop for this project. This is a purely Christian building scheme, and none of the civil administrators are mentioned.[72] Although it is likely some city officials were involved at some level, their absence from the inscriptions, as well as the more unusual omission of church administrators, may signify a further step away by the Church from city government with regards to building, and the increasing role the bishop took in such projects.

Imperial Patronage

The details of the large or expensive imperial church projects will be dealt with more extensively in other chapters, but a word on their frequency and organisation is appropriate here. Surprisingly there are only three periods when imperial activity took place: the Constantinian period or just after, the late fourth century, and the middle of the fifth century. We cannot easily say why this should be, but I think it emphasises the relative independence of Christian building from the imperial bureaucracy, as well as the civil administration. That is, the former did not need the latter, and so the emperor, rarely felt it necessary to build churches as a result. The infrequency of imperial, or lay, intervention in church construction in Rome also indicates the clear wealth the Church soon obtained, which allowed them to carry out such work without outside help.

The organisation behind an imperial church building project has been already examined through our discussion of the second church of S. Paulo Fuori le Mura above, in fact the only imperial new build that we have evidence for such a system. We cannot assume this case can be applied to the seven schemes that Constantine or his sons began though.[73] The inscriptions marking their completion are lost and were not copied

[71] *CBCR* III. 5 & 53-7 cf. *LTUR* III. 217; Magi F., *Il calendario dipinto sotto Santa Maria Maggiore*, (1972); *LP* I.232.
[72] *ICUR* II. 435 n. 111 & II. 71 n. 42, II. 98 n.6, II. 139 n.28.
[73] These being the ambulatory basilicas of St. Agnes, St. Laurence, SS. Marcellinus and Peter and the churches of St. Peter the apostle, the Holy Cross, the first St. Paul's and the Lateran Basilica. For the idea

down,[74] but it is likely however that the organisation apparent in the imperial prescript for the re-building of St. Paul's was not very different to that first implemented under Constantine or soon after. We do have more information though with two cases of imperial money going towards improving already existing churches, where Valentinian III and his mother Galla Placidia are involved as donors.

When the empress, around 440/50, repairs the damaged mosaic of S. Paolo, she acknowledges the other reconstruction work of Leo I. In the inscription describing his restoration, the role played by two priests, named Felix and Adeodatus, is acknowledged. This again implies these two individuals actually organised the day-to-day running of the project, with the pope being the initiator and official donor.[75] It is interesting to note that with the imperial inscription no other people are mentioned as being involved in the mosaic's repair, yet with the papal work others are referred to. This is likely to have been more a reflection of how imperial work was portrayed, that is as a personal gift from the emperor, rather than an accurate picture of the bureaucratic reality behind the programme. As we have seen, when the second S. Paolo was built, the ecclesiastical authorities were informed and questioned, but do not seem to have been directly involved in the building work. The emperors employed their own separate architects and planners, shown by the discussion of the Theodosian Bridge project, which was part of the same programme.

The imperial family of Galla Placidia, Valentinian III and his sister Honoria also repaired the mosaics in S. Croce in 425/44, but again no detail is given of who else took part in the project.[76] This is characteristic of many imperial building programmes as we have said, where the dedicatory inscription marking its completion is used as a way of promoting their munificence and generosity, rather than providing an accurate record of who was involved in the building work. Such acknowledgements are more of a priority where imperial money is not involved. As such, our knowledge of imperial Christian projects is limited, with the construction of the second S. Paolo being our only, albeit detailed, template for any speculation.

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that the Lateran should be regarded more as a 'private' building project see Brandt O., 'Early Church Building Policy'.

[74] The only exceptions are some fragmentary copies made from old St. Peter's which seem to confirm Constantine's primary involvement, but do not enlighten us as to any other individuals role-*ICUR* II. 345 nn.1-2. However there was an inscription on the gold cross above the apostle's tomb mentioning Constantine and his mother Helena- *ICUR* II.199 n.1, 346 n.3.

[75] Empress' repair-*ICUR* II. 81 n.17, 98 n.5, 68 nn.82-3/ *ILCV* I. 1761 a-c. Leo I's repair-*ICUR* (NS) II. 4783.

[76] *ICUR* II. 435 n.107.

Overall, Christian building could be described as independent and parallel to the rest of the building and restoration activity in Rome. The evidence we have points to a system where the bishop led, or had a senior role in, the construction of the majority of churches in the city, the exceptions being the imperial projects where he seems to have been used in an advisory capacity. The actual daily running of individual church building appears to have been headed by priests, who were perhaps part of some sort of permanent building committee. We will see now how the financial and bureaucratic independence evident in Christian building, is in complete contrast to the system utilised for the construction or repair of pagan or municipal buildings in Rome. Here, the state, in the form of the emperor or civil administration, was central.

1.3.2. Temple Building and Restoration

Alongside the Christian building of the fourth and early fifth century there was still, albeit sporadic, temple constructions and repairs occurring.[77] So now we need to ask how this work was able to continue with imperial indifference, and how it was organised in practice. As well as the laws of the period concerning pagan buildings, we need to examine the inscriptions marking the works completion for clues, for which we rely heavily. These are rather formalised, so their reliability as to whether they represent a true picture of who was involved in certain projects must be assessed. That is, just because the senate, prefect or emperor is or is not mentioned does that mean necessarily that they were involved or not involved in reality? The fact that there are variations within the standard formula does, however, imply a reflection on reality. This variety in the wording of the inscriptions is the only consistent theme, and suggests an ad hoc system, commensurate with the experience of Symmachus. Changes to the system from above may also explain the absence or inclusion of certain figures. Another obvious pattern in all the work we have evidence for is its instigation by members or former members of the civil government of Rome, with no mention of the emperor. This should

[77] Indeed, such activity seems to have been more frequent than in the third century- Goddard C.J., 'The Evolution of Pagan Sanctuaries in Late Antique Italy (Fourth to Sixth Century AD): A New Administrative and Legal Framework. A Paradox.' in *Les Cités de l'italie tardo-antique (IVe – VIe siècle)*, Collection de l'école française de Rome 369 (2006), pp. 281-308 with some possible reasons for this.

not be surprising as the Prefect of the City was given more autonomy from 331, and the emperor was rarely in the city. Nevertheless, it is a sign of imperial disapproval, as similar Christian projects at this time involved building *ex novo*, and occasionally the emperor is cited as a patron on the larger ventures. This situation for pagan buildings was as a result of the gradual and then complete removal of imperial funds and support for pagan temples and shrines.[78]

In contrast to Christian building, we will see how, according to the inscriptions, private extra-state funding for the construction or repair of pagan temples or shrines is extremely rare. This reliance on the inscriptions, especially with temple building, is a reflection of the times, where non-Christian sources on the matter are conspicuous by their silence.

Publicly Funded Building and Restoration

An interesting first example is the Temple of Jupiter Heliopolitanus, whose restoration, although not definitively financed by public funds, is thought to be because it was carried out while such funds were still available for pagan buildings. It lay on the east side of the Janiculum hill outside the Aurelian walls. Many cult items and votive objects of the god, and other Syrian deities, have been found close to the remains of a rectangular structure with a hexagonal apse, just west of the Viale Glorioso. The archaeology indicates that the first temple here was built in the mid-first century AD or first half of the second, and rebuilt in the fourth century. This rebuilding was required after its abandonment and destruction, probably under Constantius II (337-61), as a coin of his was found in the ruins.[79] A more precise estimation could be before 342/6, when an edict of Constantius II and Constans was written to the *praefectus urbis* Cattulinus, legislated against the destruction of temples outside the walls.[80] It is possible this pronouncement was a reaction to this temple's demolition. Its rebuilding has been assumed to be under the emperor Julian, because of the work and money involved, and the overtly pagan nature of the project.[81] As we will see though, such rebuilding and repairs cannot be so easily assigned in reality. With the cases of restoration or

[78] See n.11.
[79] *LTUR* III.138-42.
[80] *Cod. Theod.* XVI.10.3.
[81] S.B.Platner & T. Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, p.295; Richardson, *Dictionary*, p.220.

rebuilding of pagan monuments in Rome that we have more evidence for, they certainly don't only occur under Julian. Further, we can produce a picture of activity in this area that shows intermittent and scarce examples to be sure, but it is certainly not a scene where such structures are totally left to decay and where nothing is done.

A further example is a temple of Apollo in Rome being 'dedicated' by the *praefectus urbi* Memmius Orfitus, in his second term of this office in 357-9.[82] This is likely to have been merely a repair of one of the temples to the god in the city, either *Palatinus* on the Palatine, or *Medicus* or *Sosianus* next to the Theatre of Marcellus. The inscription was found not far from the latter so a restoration of Apollo *Medicus* seems more likely.[83] Even though a clear advocate of paganism by this gesture, Ammianus does not speak highly of Orfitus,[84] and its timing suggests it was done as part of the tidying up of the city in advance of the visit of Constantius. So whether the motivation was merely aesthetic or religious is difficult to say, perhaps it was both. Constantius visited the pagan sites as much for their fame as anything else, as well as Christian centres for more practical reasons it seems.[85] In any case, the Theatre of Marcellus or the Palatine were obvious places the emperor would go and so this restoration and its timing should be seen in that context. The project could of course have taken place after the emperor's visit as a response to a complaint or a lost law by him perhaps; Constantius does seem to have cared about the fate of the temples after all.[86] A *curator* is mentioned as being involved, a Flavius Claudius Evangelus, but his full job title is not given frustratingly. We must assume he was a *curator* or *comes aedium sacrarum, operum publicorum*, or *maximorum*. In any case, it shows the city government was fully involved, with Evangelus presumably in charge of the practical side of the project, with the prefect in charge of the finances and initiating the work. It also indicates, even after 331, that these junior posts still had a significant role to play, albeit now within the prefect's jurisdiction.

What is more important for us is the fact that this represents the prefect of the city still initiating, or being a part of, such activity on a pagan building, thus indicating

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[82] *CIL* VI. 45.

[83] A few years later, on the night of the 19th March 363, the Temple of Apollo *Palatinus* burned down (Amm. Marc. XXIII.3.3). The restoration of this temple is not recorded but no doubt occurred with Julian being the emperor at the time.

[84] Amm. Marc. XIV.6.1.

[85] Amm. Marc. XVI.10.13-14; *LP.* I.207.

[86] See n.80. There may have been a lost law that referred to the preservation of temples *within* the walls with games attached, in this case the *Ludi Apollinares* (*Inscr. Ital.* XIII.2.250-1).

that this work continued to be publicly funded. This project however, may have been justifiable on aesthetic grounds, and public funds may have been available in Rome for temple restorations later than most places for this reason.

An equally important restoration was carried out by Praetextatus, as prefect in 367, on the *Porticus Deorum Consentium*, beneath the escarpment of the Capitol Hill below the *Tabularium* at the rear of the Forum.[87] From the inscription which survives, albeit restored, on the entablature of the portico, it is clear, as with the previous example, that a *curator* or *consularis*, Longeius, was also involved in the project. This again shows that the restoration of pagan monuments was still very much publicly funded, and still a significant feature of the job of the prefect and his staff. We must assume once more, though the inscription does not tell us, that Longeius was *curator* or *consularis operum publicorum* or *maximorum*, and that he may have been given the task of practically organising the restoration with Praetextatus initiating it in the first place. This seems rather likely as the image we have of Praetextatus is of a dedicated pagan, a fully justifiable portrayal considering the evidence for it.[88]

Another example, but with rather less evidence attached, is the construction or repair of a portico around or near the Temple of *Bonus Eventus*. Our only source for this is Ammianus, who places the temple and the portico near the *lavacrum Agrippae*, that is within the central Campus Martius. He describes this work being carried out by the Prefect of the City, Claudius, in 374.[89] The legal and political difficulties connected to new building seems to have been circumvented here by the fact that this was just providing a portico for a temple, although its purpose seems to have been to benefit the worshippers of the god.[90] The temple and portico's history after this period is unknown. It seems to have taken up part of the space occupied by the formal pool and gardens built by Agrippa, suggesting their abandonment by this time. Whether or not the portico or colonnade was around or near the temple, Claudius names it after the god, and so it was at least meant to be associated with it. Again, this is a sign of public funds still being available for pagan projects up to this date, and Ammianus in the same passage

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[87] *CIL* VI.102; he also removed the walls of private houses which were built against temple walls (Amm. Marc. XXVII. 9.10). Perhaps a sign of growing irreverence, towards the traditional gods at least, or just an indication of a need for more space for housing?

[88] How he is represented in Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, passim eg. I.7.17; list of his priesthoods- *CIL* VI 1779.

[89] Amm. Marc. XXIX.6.19; *PLRE* I. Caesarius 7.

[90] A law of 364 prohibited new building in Rome by the prefect in favour of just restoration- *Cod. Theod.* XV.1.11. This still allowed for new Christian building though, (and imperial projects) which, as we have seen, did not require the attention of the prefect. See n.120.

mentions in passing that Claudius also restored *vetera plurima*, some of which could have been pagan as well as civil. With no more evidence for the practical side of this work, we cannot say any more.

A further interesting case of temple restoration comes from the Temple of Saturn in the forum. The entablature records a repair of the temple by the Senate after a fire.[91] From the use of spolia and stylistic dating, it is thought to have been carried out in either the early fourth century, after the fire of Carinus in 283, or the second half of the fourth century, between 360-80. The latter date was imagined because it is the period from Julian to Eugenius, two emperors who were actively pro-pagan or sympathetic to that cause. Also, this is a time seen by some as a period of pagan revival, with the cult of Saturn especially prominent in this, perhaps typified by the writing of Macrobius' *Saturnalia* around 380.[92] It is certainly the case that with public funds removed from 382, such a restoration would not have been possible beyond that date, so this provides us with a *terminus ante quem*. However to confine this work to the period from Julian may be inaccurate. Whatever the situation, it is interesting to see the Senate take a leading role in such a prominent pagan project. This is both a sign of a majority pagan presence within that body at the time of the work, whenever that may be, and also the relative independence the Senate now enjoyed, with imperial eyes now firmly focused on the frontiers and Constantinople. This independence may also be a sign of the desperate times as regards paganism though, that is the Senate having to act independently to restore a temple, an act they may not have done since the days of the Republic. On a more practical note, it may also show that building projects by this period could be carried out without the prefect's involvement, at least officially. As such, his name appearing on fourth century restoration inscriptions may at times simply be a formality. As we have seen with Praetextatus though, where he is very likely to have initiated the work on the *Porticus Deorum Consentium*, the picture may have been one where decisions were taken in a relatively ad hoc fashion. Once more a comparatively disorganised system comes into view, a situation Symmachus backs up.

After 382, under Gratian, with state funding ceasing completely, so repairs and restorations of temples largely disappear from the epigraphic record after that time. Consequently, our knowledge of what happens to the temples also disappears. The costs

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[91] *CIL* VI. 937.

[92] Richardson L., 'The Approach to the Temple of Saturn in Rome', *AJA* 84, p.56; Claridge A., *Rome: An Archaeological Guide*, p. 80-1; *LTUR*. IV.235.

now involved meant few people could afford to carry out such projects privately, so it is likely that from 382, and probably for some time before, most temples, even in Rome, were left to decay. The actions of Praetextatus, who wanted to put a stop to the illegal robbery of building material from the temples in 384, show this.[93]

However, we have a now lost inscription telling us of the construction and rebuilding of the *Secretarium Senatus* in the late fourth century and 412-14 respectively.[94] Although ostensibly a municipal building, it has been argued to have been a development of the *Atrium Minervae* or *Libertatis*, both known to have been in the same area but of uncertain location. We know of a statue to Minerva being restored by the prefect Anicius Acilius Aginatius Faustus in 472/3, which was presumably situated in the atrium of Minerva. Such a restoration should not however be seen as a pagan revival or a statement by Faustus, but rather a sign that such statues were now just secularised objects of art to be treasured.[95] We must assume the atrium housing the statue was also restored. Similarly, we have an inscription signifying that some time later, under Theodoric, the Atrium of Libertas was restored, and this may have included a statue to Libertas.[96]

There is also evidence for a restoration of the Temple of Concord from the late empire, possibly the fourth century. An inscription describing its collapse and restoration is now lost but was written down by the compiler of the Einsiedeln syllogue in the eighth century, and was found in the vicinity of the temple, situated below the Capitol Hill, by the *Tabularium*.[97] Like the Temple of Saturn a few yards away, it was a project headed by the senate judging from the inscription. This leads us to the same conclusions as that example, but with the added possibility that the Senate was more directly involved in building repairs in this period than is currently thought, the prefect and his staff not having a monopoly on this. Again a rather fluid system emerges surrounding temple building projects.

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[93] Symm. *Rel.* 21.
[94] *CIL* VI.1718.
[95] CIL VI.526 & 1664- it was repaired after damage from a roof collapse not because it was fading in beauty. A relative of his restored a Temple of Isis in Portus a hundred years earlier however- *Fast. Arch.*, XII (1957), p.494 (n.8108); *LTUR* IV.262; Fraschetti A., *La conversione : da Roma pagana a Roma cristiana*, pp.157-8.
[96] *CIL* VI.1794; Fraschetti, *Conversione*, p.211 (for the Atrium still existing in the sixth century-Cassiod. *Var.* I.4.1 & IV.4.5).
[97] *LTUR* I.319; *CIL* VI.89; *Itineraria Einsidlense* in Urlichs C.L. (ed.), *Codex Urbis Romae Topographici*, p.64.

Privately Funded Building and Restoration

Evidence for private patronage of pagan temples in Rome at this time is very scarce, which is surprising. One would have thought wealthy pagan aristocrats would have provided their own money more often, especially with the public funds available decreasing in the fourth century, and then eventually ceasing altogether in 382 under Gratian. An argument and explanation for this could be that the traditional state cults had to be supported by state funds, as part of the *pax deorum* contract between the gods and the Roman government.[98] In this way, private money would not have sufficed for the security of the state, which was the reasoning behind the pagan position by this time. However, the spoliation and decay of most temples and shrines could have destroyed more evidence for private involvement, so the picture of patronage we have may be misleading.

Whatever the case, the only definitive evidence from Rome of private pagan patronage in the fourth century, is that of Tamesius Olympius Augentius' construction of a Mithraic cult centre, or *antrum*, near the site of Aurelian's Temple of Sol by the Via Flaminia.[99] The inscription commemorating its completion also describes a *phoebeia templa* built by his grandfather Victor, possibly Nonius Victor Olympius, a devotee of Mithras in the mid-fourth century. Whether Victor's construction was through a private initiative or when he held a civic post we cannot say for sure, but the absence of any reference to such a post suggests the former.[100] The inscription is quite categorical however about Augentius not relying on Rome's municipal funds for the project. This explicit reference has been used to date the completion of the Mithraeum to after 382, when Gratian effectively removed state support for the pagan cults. As we have seen though, if state funds were only required for state cults, then private cults such as Mithraism could always have been funded privately. As such, Augentius' statement could have been used any time before or after 382. It is the prosopography that puts the inscription more reliably in the late fourth century, but an earlier date cannot be ruled

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[98] Ward-Perkins B., *From Classical Antiquity*, p.87 citing Matthews J.F., 'Symmachus and the Oriental Cults', *JRS* 63 (1973), pp.176-7 (Zosimus, IV. 59.3).

[99] *CIL* VI. 754. The inscription was found on the east side of Piazza San Silvestro with an elaborate marble monument with seven niches; *LTUR* III. 264-5.

[100] *PLRE* I. Olympius 18. His son, Tamesius' father, was also a devotee of Mithras (*PLRE* I. Augentius 2) – see *CIL* VI. 749-53.

out. If the numbers of Mithraea were as numerous as is thought, then this sort of financing could have been very significant, and of course explains why these 'caves' were created within private buildings.

If however non-state pagan cults had always been privately funded, why did Augentius feel the need to express the private nature of this project? It could have been a reaction to Gratian's decree, or a sign that some such cults were given state money, at least occasionally, perhaps when a member was a holder of high office. So the picture is unclear for private pagan projects based only on this inscription. Although a practice of continuing and perfectly legal unofficial funding of Mithraism and perhaps Isis worship and other such cults, may explain the amount of Christian rhetoric aimed at them rather than the state gods, whose income could be cut off very effectively.

The only other possible example of private funding for a pagan building or restoration project from this period is far more speculative. It seems to involve a '*Symmachus heres*' who recently *composuit* a temple of Venus or Flora, according to the anti-pagan poem *Carmen contra paganos* written around 400.[101] There is nothing to say the individual referred to was not holding public office at the time, and thus used civic funds.[102] Nevertheless, if the source is accurate in at least its dating, this is a significant event. The construction *ex novo* of a pagan temple at this time, whether it was publicly or privately financed, would have been a radical step, especially if it was in Rome. None of the twelve known temples to Venus are possible candidates. The remains of the two temples to Flora we know existed do not survive, so it is possible that it was a restoration of one of these. The idea that it was the building of a yet undiscovered temple should not be discounted though. If it did occur it was a highly symbolic and antagonistic move by the donor, and also an illegal one if public money was used. Perhaps the columned structure in the famous 'Symmachorum Diptych' is a reference to this temple, a powerful statement of this family's traditionalist credentials? The illegality of using public money makes it more likely that if this project did occur, private money was used, the Symmachi were certainly rich enough. The costs involved would mean such activity was inevitably rare, but it shows the possibility that such

[101] *Anthologia Latina*, (ed. Shackleton-Bailey) p.22 [ll.112-4]. For differing opinions as to the identities of the Symmachus in question and the temple see Matthews J. 'The Historical Setting of the 'Carmen contra paganos'' in *Historia* 19 (1970), pp. 464-79 esp. p.477 n.63 & *LTUR* II. 254.
[102] Ward-Perkins, *From Classical Antiquity*, p.87 & notes.

projects could still technically occur, even if only in the imagination of the anonymous author of the *Carmen*.

The removal of public funds would clearly have crippled even repairs to temples, smaller shrines or altars, but this shows private funds could not be stopped. As long as a pagan elite still existed such work continued, albeit on an intermittent and small scale. There was indeed persistent legislation protecting pagan structures, but there is a difference between legislating against further destruction and actively restoring such buildings. We see these protective laws being issued until the sixth century, but evidence of any kind, for restorations, let alone new building after 400, does not exist.[103]

So the picture for temple building or restoration in general is a confused one. Public funds, when they were available, were used by prefects of that religious persuasion. Such work could not be consistent or have any long-term planning attached to it as Christian prefects by the middle of the fourth century became more common. However, we also see the senate involved at times, a sure sign that pagans were the majority there when the work was commissioned and completed. So public funds were used up to 382, but who was in charge or who initiated any projects varied.

As for private projects, the small amount of evidence we have means any conclusions must be tentative. It would not be surprising though, if a rich pagan family used its own money to repair, or build from new, a pagan temple or shrine, because of the prestige involved and the display of wealth it showed. This would be in spite of the potential unpopularity such an action could cause. A genuine belief that the survival of the state would be assured through the performance of the old rites and placation of the gods, would have been a powerful motivation in itself by the late fourth or early fifth centuries. This could have overridden any thoughts of the likely negative consequences following such activity. From the Mithraic example we have seen, there was a certain pride in not using or needing to use public funds, but this was probably the typical scenario surrounding cults such as this. So it is likely private funding continued for unofficial cults both before and after Gratian's decree, partly explaining Christian concerns. As for similar funding of the state cults, although it is argued that this would

[103] Laws and actions protecting temples: *Cod. Theod.* XVI.10.3, Symmachus, *Rel.* 21, Marjorian, *Novel* 4, Cassiodorus, *Variae* 3.31.

have been ineffective for state security, as Symmachus implies and Zosimus reports, it is equally likely that by the end of the fourth century and going into the fifth, with no alternative possible, some members of the elite who were wealthy enough, would have provided some funds rather than let certain temples deteriorate altogether.[104] The construction or repair of a temple to Venus or Flora around 400, which the *Carmen* suggests occurred, seems neither unlikely nor impossible as a result.

1.3.3. Civic Building and Repairs

Unlike pagan projects, building or restoration of civic or non-religious buildings continued fairly consistently through the fourth into the fifth century, and we even have some examples from the sixth. Such consistency can be attributed to the utilitarian need for these structures to continue to exist for political or social reasons. As such, emperors were more involved and private programmes were rare. Furthermore, the only *new* civic structures created in this period were initiated by the emperor, even before the law of 364, which prohibited the prefect to construct any new buildings.[105]

Building and Repair by the Emperor

Imperial projects constitute about a fifth of the surviving evidence we have for municipal building activity from Constantine onwards. As we have said, this includes the only examples of new constructions of this type, as well as examples of repairs. Of the new additions to the city, the emperor is understandably prominent in the inscriptions commemorating the completion of the project, but often the senate and the prefect are also mentioned. In the examples where they are not, the schemes seem to have been major propaganda exercises, where they themselves may have indeed been the initiators and administrators of the project. This includes the placement of an obelisk in the Circus Maximus by Constantius, and the Arch of Gratian, Valentinian and Theodosius. Similarly, we have a portico created by Valens, Gratian and almost

[104] Symm, *Rel.* 3 passim; Zosimus, IV.59.3. See n.98.
[105] See n.90.

certainly Valentinian, where they take all the credit.[106] An exception to this rule may be the construction of a new forum, described in the eighth century as the *forum palatini*, by Valentinian, Valens and Gratian, where the prefect Flavius Eupraxius is listed, which dates it to 374.[107] This however may just have been an embellishment of an already existing space, so explaining perhaps the inclusion of the Urban Prefect in being allowed to share the credit.[108]

The other examples we have for imperial projects further reinforce the picture of an ad hoc building bureaucracy, a result of the frequent reforms to the system in this period perhaps. For example, the construction or restoration of the *pons Aurelius* or *Valentinianus* is described as being dedicated by the former prefect L. Aurelius Avianus Symmachus, the father of Quintus- the writer of the *relationes* -, and prefect in 364/5. This dedication is referred to as an honour, presumably because he no longer held the post of prefect. The emperor Valentinian is mentioned first however, followed by the senate, and then Symmachus at the bottom in smaller letters, so that the proper hierarchy is clear to the viewer.[109] If this was a new bridge then the elder Symmachus must have initialised it before Valentinian's own edict of 364 came into force, which was when he was prefect. In any case, it seems likely that it was in fact just a restoration of the *pons Agrippae*, a construction by the emperor Claudius.[110] The unusual step of naming the prefect that started the project, rather than the prefect in the post at the time in which it was finished, shows how fluid the inscriptions could be and may indicate that Symmachus was involved, even when he no longer held the prefecture. The infrequent appearance of the senate, as *SPQR*, on inscriptions of this time implies its presence here was not just a formality, but rather a sign that they were involved as a body, in what was a major building project for the period. A similar programme with the *pons Cestius*, renamed *Gratiani*, also mentions the senate, albeit briefly in the last line, but no prefect appears. The inscription implies the senate initiated the project, but it was managed by the emperor Valentinian and Caesars Valens and Gratian, whose nomenclature dominates the statement.[111] With the improvements to the Aurelian Walls,

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[106] Obelisk: *CIL* VI. 1163 & Amm. Marc. XVI.10.15-17; arch: *CIL* VI. 1184; portico: *CIL* VI. 1178. The other example is a repair to the Theatre of Pompey by Arcadius and Honorius (*CIL* VI. 1191) in 395 or 402. The importance and notoriety of the theatre may have led them to manage the project personally.
[107] *CIL* VI. 1177 in *Itin. Eins.* – Urlichs (ed.), p.62; *PLRE* I. Eupraxius.
[108] Ward-Perkins, *From Classical Antiquity*, p.38-9 (n.2); *LTUR.* II.311-2.
[109] *CIL* VI. 31402 (also 31403-12 with variant structures); *PLRE* I. Symmachus 3.
[110] See n.90; *LTUR.* IV. 107-8.
[111] *CIL* VI. 1175; *LTUR.* IV. 108-9.

carried out under Arcadius and Honorius, the Senate are once more prominently mentioned as setting up the inscription. Stilicho, as *Magister Militae* at the time, is described as putting up statues to the emperors, and no doubt suggested these improvements. The Prefect Longinianus is also listed as administering the whole project, dating the repairs to 400/2.[112] This inscription, more than most others, illustrates quite nicely perhaps the different stages in the building or restoration projects in Rome, where the emperor was involved. That is, those around the emperors, either a civic official or a Christian bishop, could initiate or suggest a scheme, which the emperors would then have to approve. Once approved, the work would in turn be administered on the ground by the prefect, who would have his assignment rubber-stamped by the Senate on completion.

Other repairs using imperial funds show some variation from this model, judging by the inscriptions we have. In the repair of the Aqua Virgo by Constantine, the *curator aquarum et miniciae* Centullius Valerianus seems to be involved, with the prefect having a central role to play when Constantius and Constans restored some baths twenty or so years later. This goes along however, with the changes to the bureaucracy described earlier. Under Theodoric about a hundred and fifty years on, with the restoration of the baths of Constantine, the Prefect is again involved.[113]

Publicly Funded Repairs

Repairs which seem to have been initiated by the prefect alone, and therefore used civic funds, follow a similar pattern, the majority of which seem to involve statues. About three-quarters of the inscriptions only mention the *praefectus urbi*, but the remainder also dedicate the work to the emperors or just mention them, these examples being mainly on particularly prestigious monuments where the emperors' appearance would have had a propagandistic value. Whether their appearance then indicates that there was an imperial order demanding the emperor's inclusion in any inscriptions, or whether this was simply down to the whim of the prefect for him to be mentioned, is unprovable. The correlation with important monuments does seem a coincidence though. There are however prominent and important restorations where the emperor is

[112] *CIL* VI. 1188-90, 1190 is fragmentary however; *PLRE* II. Longinianus.
[113] Aqua Virgo: *CIL* VI. 31564; ancient baths restored (thought to be Agrippa's as inscription was found near to where they are thought to be located): *CIL* VI. 1165; Baths of Constantine: *CIL* VI. 1665.

not listed, suggesting the inclination of the Prefect is the most likely reason for this variability. That is, at times prefects could gain all the credit, even for prominent or famous restorations. This shows the degree of autonomy they had by this period. We should not be too concerned about the types of buildings restored though, as accidents of survival have no doubt distorted the evidence. The fact that just over half were statues proves this, objects more likely to survive for aesthetic value if nothing else.[114] Of the twenty-two examples of statue repairs we have, two mention the emperor as well, but just for dating purposes, and neither of these have enough context to be able to say whether they were from prominent statues or housed in important buildings.[115] The other restorations of this period led by the prefect that we have evidence for, were more about retaining the material integrity of the city and its amenities. That is, the repair of baths, administrative buildings and aqueducts.[116] The exceptions were a restoration of a fountain, a series of repairs on the 'colosseum', and the apparent embellishment of the *Vicus Patricius*.[117]

Interestingly, of the repairs to the 'colosseum' all mention the emperors of the time as well as the prefect, as do the inscriptions commemorating the work on the Aventine baths, the *Statio aquarum*, the *Aqua Claudia*, and the prefect's seat. The latter two, as well as those recording the repair to part of the *Aqua Marcia* and *Anio Novus* aqueducts, also imply a different organisation was at work for the upkeep of the water systems of the city. In the inscriptions here we get the rare appearance of the *curatores*, the posts under the prefect that had more focused functions. In these cases the *curator* or *consularis aquarum*, or the *comes formarum*, all developments of the same post through the fourth into the fifth century.[118] With the *Statio aquarum* and *Aqua Marcia*,

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[114] *CIL* VI. 1156b & 1651-72.
[115] *CIL* VI. 1659 & 1665.
[116] Aventine baths: *CIL* VI. 1703 (AD 414); Baths of Constantine: *CIL* VI.1750 with no imperial involvement (c.AD 443); the *Statio aquarum*: *CIL* VI. 36951 (AD 328); *Secretarium Senatus*?: *CIL* VI.1718 (AD 412-4, see p. 42 above); seat of Urban Prefect: *CIL* VI. 31959 (AD 408/23); *Curia*: Cassiod. *Var.* IX.7 (c.AD 527); part of *Aqua Marcia/Augusta*: *CIL* VI. 1765 (just before AD 468); *castellum* of *Aqua Claudia*: *CIL* VI. 3866 (AD 365); *Anio Novus* aqueduct: *CIL* VI. 3865 (AD 381). A recent article has argued for the restoration of the *catubulum* off the via Lata, or some other sort of stables, in the mid-fifth century by the Urban Prefect Rufius Valerius Messala. The theory, however, relies on a very fragmentary inscription- Orlandi S., Panciera S., Virgili P., 'Attività edilizia monumentale nel centro di Roma nel V sec. d.c. A proposito di una nuova iscrizione del prefetto urbano Rufius Valerius Messala' in Ghilardi M., Goddard C. J., Porena P. (eds.), *Les Cités de l'italie tardo-antique (IVe – VIe siècle)*, pp.123-36.
[117] Fountain: *CIL* VI. 1728 a & b (AD 391/2); 'Colosseum': *CIL* VI. 32086-7 & 32089-92 (fifth century AD); *Vicus Patricius*: *CIL* VI. 1775 (early fifth century AD?) - perhaps related to the remodelling of S. Pudenziana under bishop Siricius? This will be discussed more later.
[118] Chastagnol, *Préfecture*, pp.47-8.

the prefect is not even mentioned, although we assume he was involved, the latter project taking place after well over a hundred years after the centralising reforms of 331. In the other two examples, the *Aqua Claudio* and *Anio Novus*, both from the mid to late fourth century, the wording suggests the *curator* was in charge of the project, with the prefect merely supervising.

An overall pattern then, if we can claim one based on such relatively few examples, is that the more prominent or important structures note the emperors involvement or interest, whereas with simple repairs or minor works, the prefect had sole control, or use of only civic as opposed to imperial funds. The relevance of this we cannot judge. Further, with the bureaucracy surrounding the administration and maintenance of the water supply, a less centralised system seems to have been at work that is not centred on the prefect. Here, the *curatores* under him still retained their powers, judging by the inscriptions we have. That is the increasing burdens of responsibility the prefect had, of which Symmachus complained, do not seem to have included this element of civic government.

Privately Funded Repairs

The only examples we have for private persons putting their own money into repairing the municipal buildings of Rome come from the very end of the fifth century. This is more than likely a sign of the collapse or destabilisation of the civic building bureaucracy by this time, and therefore represents a new phenomenon. The two examples are a prefect of the city using his own money to repair the 'Colosseum', and one of the Symmachus family restoring the Theatre of Pompey, the latter being refunded by Theodoric.[119] For two clearly wealthy individuals having to use their own money to restore two such prominent monuments in this way is a sure sign of a lack of available civic money, or a breakdown in the system for restoration which Theodoric was eager to reverse. These two projects then provide a fitting close to this section, as they mark the demise of the organised bureaucracy that was once capable of sustaining Rome's material magnificence.

[119] 'Colosseum': *CIL* VI. 1716 a-c (AD 484); Theatre of Pompey: Cassiod. *Var.* IV.51 (late fifth century AD).

As we have argued above, the variability seen in the epigraphic record for building and restoration in Rome of this period is seen by some as evidence for changes in the system, with certain posts disappearing and others becoming more prominent. This could well be the case, but from the examples we have discussed it seems that even in projects of a similar type and period, the people involved appear to vary in an almost random way. So in fact, we could have two things going on; first that over a period of time certain posts and roles in the Roman civil bureaucracy do disappear or alter in prominence or importance. But also we are seeing a system where the decision as to who is in charge of certain projects, and involved on the administrative side, is decided on a fairly ad hoc random basis. Either way, we could not say the system was stable or organised to much degree, shown by the inscriptions described above and Q. Symmachus' own experiences in 384. The only co-ordinated and consistent system seems to be that in place for building churches. This may be because it was independent of the state.

1.4. Choosing a Site

The crucial question posed by this chapter and whole thesis has failed to be answered directly however. Could the Church in reality actually choose the site on which it wanted to build a Christian centre? Was this a practical possibility? I think what we have seen so far indicates that it was certainly feasible. The rest of this thesis will argue that this is what actually happened in many cases in Rome.

The evidence we have observed in this section makes it likely that the Church in Rome was relatively independent of the city administration with regards to building legislation and decision-making. A law of 364 further indicates this. It prohibited new building in the city and allowed only for restorations, something the Church was clearly not bound by.[120] Also, the inscriptions we have from ecclesiastical structures rarely include a government city official. This is in direct contrast to the epigraphic evidence we have from pagan buildings, where they are usually mentioned as central to the project. This apparent independence is again emphasised by the consistent appearance of a few named priests, around the late fourth and early fifth century, in inscriptions

[120] See n.90; an Urban prefect trying to circumvent this- Amm. Marc. XXVII.3.7.

describing the building or restoration of churches. This may indicate there was some sort of building committee, established at that time, or more likely earlier, that was in charge of all matters in relation to church construction. Either way, it shows the ecclesiastical authorities headed church building schemes, not government officials. Such freedom from state interference is apparent during the aftermath of the exile of Ursinus, Damasus' rival for the papacy in 366. A letter by the emperors sent the following year to the then prefect Praetextatus, asks that the *Basilica Sicinini*, the last stronghold used by the Ursinians, be returned to the authority of Damasus as bishop.[121] Thus, the churches of Rome were under the direct control of the bishop, which rather assumes their construction also was, and was independent from the prefect. Praetextatus only had the power to restore it to the Church authorities, because the basilica in question was removed from the bishop's charge by Ursinus.

We will probably never know to what extent such autonomy meant that they could choose any site in Rome on which to build, or whether there were some restrictions. Because of this independence from city government, it is certainly likely that most land, or existing buildings, were purchasable. We do see very specific sites for churches being chosen elsewhere after all, by the bishop of Gaza around 402 and Paulinus, the bishop of Nola, in 403/4.[122] Such an ability allowed the ecclesiastical authorities to be able to build churches in useful areas for itself, like on main roads or near popular sites. The government officials' rare appearance in Christian projects implies that when they were involved, it is in their capacity as a private individual that they gave money towards some part of a Church's construction or restoration. The fact that they were Urban Prefect or a *curator* then, could well have been incidental, until the Gratian reforms of 382. Similarly, the emperor's inconsistent presence in both civic and Christian building inscriptions, also suggests he was only mentioned when he wanted to be seen as personally involved, or gave money to a project in a quasi-private capacity.

Another factor that makes location choice a likely luxury for the Church from the fourth century, is the huge amounts of imperial funding and land that was given to it from that period.[123] Such wealth is apparent from the famous quote by Praetextatus,

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[121] *Coll. Avell.*, 6.
[122] See nn.33 & 43.
[123] The acquisition of such wealth may have been possible before the persecutions of the mid-third century, when and it seems Christian groups were able to buy public land for their own purposes even then - *SHA*. Alex. Sev. 49.6 and implied in the 'Edict of Milan' of 313- Lact. *De Mort. Pers.* 48.7-9.

indicating the money and power the Roman bishopric had attained by Damasus' day.[124] This wealth made it possible, like the emperors of preceding centuries, to buy the land in the area of the city where they wanted to build.[125] Just as the emperors sought to build monuments to themselves in areas in which would be highly visible or frequently visited by being in highly accessible places, why would the various bishops of the fourth and fifth centuries not want to do the same? Ostensibly, this motivation by the Church authorities also meant Christianity was further promoted and visible in the city, which was no doubt the primary motivation, but it also meant the bishop responsible would also gain the notoriety for doing so. As we have argued, this all tied in very well with the pre-existing self-promotional practice of the Roman elite in such matters.

Further, the ownership of large amounts of property by the Church, even by the mid-fourth century could be evident from the *LP*. The endowment lists given for many churches in this source, most of which describe holdings within the city, have recently been argued to have been the existing property of the Church rather than gifts given to it by an outside donor.[126] This would mean the Church administration had access and control of far more land inside Rome than previously thought at such an early date. Although we cannot say to what extent this was acquired by the Church or donated by the emperor or others in an earlier period, with the wealth the ecclesiastical authorities in the city now had, it seems highly probable that at least some of it was purchased, or selectively utilised at the bishop's own initiative. The cases of aristocrats giving land to the Church are very rare. Valila, who donated land in the form of a secular basilica, in which to build a church, is one of only two known examples of this possibly occurring in Rome, the other being with S. Pudenziana. In the Valila inscription, we have a precise description of his generous gift. If such a situation was not uncommon, one would have expected to find such benevolence proudly featuring in many church

[124] Jerome, *Cont. Joa. Hier.* 8- for quote see n.40.

[125] Eg. Caesar or Augustus and the Theatre of Marcellus - buying land for its construction: *Res Gestae* 21, and a desirable location to be used at any cost: Dio XLIII.49.2-3; Trajan and his Forum- the large scale excavation of a hill and levelling of the ground in a residential area was required for the construction of the forum. The attraction of the site may have been to complete Caesar's desire to connect the Roman forum with the Campus Martius: see Platner-Ashby, *Topographical Dictionary*, pp.238-9 & refs; Diocletian and his baths - houses, buildings and a quadriga statue of the usurper Piso were moved or destroyed for its construction: *SHA* Trig. Tyr. 21.6-7, *LTUR* V.53.

[126] Hillner J., 'Families, Patronage and the Titular Churches of Rome, c.300-c.600' in Cooper K & Hillner J. (eds.), *Dynasty, Patronage and Authority in a Christian Capital: Rome 300-900* (2007) & refs.

inscriptions, but this is not the case. Indeed, even the interpretation of this example has been questioned.[127]

It is argued, that going into the sixth century and beyond the Gothic Wars, when the Roman administration in Italy finally collapsed, the Church took on the new found responsibility of civil maintenance and administration. I would argue however, that with church building and maintenance in Rome at least, this responsibility was taken on two hundred years earlier. It is, as I will suggest, the location of many of the churches of Rome in the fourth and fifth centuries that proves that this responsibility was used for its own evangelising ends.

1.5. The Politics of Restoration and Embellishment

A final question worth asking is whether building and restoration in Rome in the fourth and fifth centuries had a religious dimension to it. That is, did what was chosen for restoration, embellishment or construction now reflect a religious agenda? Did pagans, with the construction of new temples becoming increasingly difficult legally, and problematic in terms of space, resort to repair and embellishment in order to advertise their beliefs, and as a means of protest against a system that was seeking to destroy them? Similarly, was the building of formal churches as much about Christians making known the new balance of power, as providing better places for worship? Is this what the extensive building projects under Damasus and Sixtus III were all about?

A few of the pagan and Christian projects of this period are worth looking at in this context. They do, I believe, show that there is an argument to be made for religion being a major part of the decision-making behind the building projects in Rome at this time. We will see how the centres of power for both Christians and pagans in the city were also the foci for the major building projects of this era; these being St. Peter's and the west end of the Roman Forum beneath the Capitoline hill respectively.

As we have seen above, three major pagan projects of this period were the restorations of the Temples of Saturn and Concord and the Portico of the *Dei Consentes*. All three were at the west end of the Roman Forum, just at the point where the *clivus*

[127] Cecchelli M.,'Valilae o valide? L'iscrizione di S. Andrea all'Esquilino', *Romanobarbarica* 11 (1991), pp.61-78.

Capitolinus from the Temple of Jupiter descends into it. This end of the forum had been a strongly religious area since the time of the kings or early Republic, and thus had a particular potency and importance for pagans from the fourth century. It was also an area at the confluence of four major roads, and originally was home to some sort of public square.[128] It was in many ways then the hub of pagan Rome. The systematic restoration of the buildings here in the fourth century seems therefore like an attempt to revitalise a pagan stronghold, and promote their cause by such activity. Such work emphasised at the same time the antiquity and powerful relationship to Rome's greatness that paganism stood for in the city. Perhaps the restoration of the buildings here was also a response to the emperors no longer sacrificing at the Temple of Jupiter *Capitolinus* from Constantine onwards. Even with the emperor's rare appearances in Rome, this area was no longer the focus for the imperial *adventus*, and this restoration activity may be seen as an attempt to re-focus the city population's attention here.

Similar Christian activity took place, I contend around St. Peter's. It is important to note that the works here were imperially funded or sponsored, and were new constructions not restorations. These two factors in themselves indicate where the new power now lay. These *ex novo* structures were arches that were placed at or towards the ends of the two bridges that led to the Vatican from the city. The first to be built was the arch of the emperors Gratian, Valentinian II and Theodosius I, which therefore must have been completed between 379-83. The inscription survives through a medieval copy, and shows that they used their own money to build it, that is imperial funds. The arch is also described as being designed as the monumental close to the *Porticus Maximae*. It lay therefore between the end of that portico and the beginning of the *pons Aelius*, later known as the *pons Petrus*, signifying its importance as a pilgrim route from the city. It is described as near this bridge in the eighth century.[129] This bridge led onto the *via Cornelia* that ran to the entrance of St. Peter's. The fact the arch mentions the end of the *Porticus Maximae*, and not St. Peter's, could suggest the latter was not part of the thinking of the emperors. However, its absence could also be seen as political expediency in the face of increasing pagan anger at their marginalisation by Christianity. In any case, the arch to the Christian, and perhaps non-Christian,

[128] Richardson L., 'The Approach to the Temple of Saturn in Rome' in *AJA* 84.1 (1980), pp.51-62 (esp. p.55).
[129] *CIL* VI. 1184; *Itin. Eins.* – Urlichs (ed.), p.61; *LTUR* I. 95-6.

population of the city was clearly a monumental entrance to the road that led to the church. It seems extraordinary that the emperors were also not aware of this.

Another arch was built in this area, dedicated by Arcadius, Honorius and Theodosius I, or the young Theodosius II, to celebrate a victory over the Goths in 402 or 405/6, which suggests a completion date between 402-8. The inscription also mentions the senate, showing their involvement in the project.[130] While it is clear this is a traditional victory arch, it was used, as with other similar arches elsewhere in the city, to mark a specific point and be in a place that would mean it would be frequently visible to the people of the city. The exact location of this arch is less clear, but it lay somewhere along the roads that led into the city from the so-called *pons Neronianus* that connected the *via Triumphalis* with the *Campus Martius*. The absence of this bridge from Procopius' account of the Gothic assault on this part of the city in the sixth century, and its omission from the regionary catalogues, has suggested to some that it was in ruins by the fourth century.[131] It seems bizarre however for the emperors to build an arch over or at the end of a road that led nowhere. A possible solution is that the *pons Neronianus* was only a foot bridge and so did not qualify as a significant or important structure.[132] This route was also the only other way that the Christians of Rome, or pilgrims coming from that direction, were able to get to St. Peter's. The increasing flow of worshippers to the apostle's tomb no doubt made the bridge's repair or continued use very expedient. In this way, both routes to St. Peter's from the city were embellished with imperial arches. Even if this result was secondary to the role these now very well-used roads had in providing a reliable audience to these new structures, the fact remains such routes were now signposted and honoured with imperial favour.

In the same way, did the reconstruction of the *pons Probi* by Theodosius I and the *vicus Patricius* in the fifth century, have anything to do with the construction of S. Caecilia and the re-modelling of S. Pudenziana respectively? The work on the Theodosian Bridge, as we have seen, took place from 381 to some time after 387,

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[130] *CIL* VI. 1196.

[131] The arch is described as near S.Celso in this area in the twelfth century, and referred to as *Arcus Aureus Alexandri*: *Mirabilia* – Valentini R. & Zucchetti G. (eds.),*Codice topografico*, II.213. It collapsed at the time of Urban V (1362-70)- *Anonymous Magliabecchianus* – Urlichs (ed.), p.153; Procopius, *Bell. Goth.* I. 22.12-24. He confuses the *porta Aurelia* with the *porta Cornelia* however, which suggests his account is less than reliable; the bridge-*LTUR* IV.111.

[132] Another solution may be that the arch was merely a restoration of one of Septimius Severus, with the bridge then going out of use with the construction of the Aurelian Wall-*LTUR* I. 80. This however still fails to explain why such an arch would be restored or modified in the fifth century if the bridge was still unusable.

according to Symmachus. The construction of the first church of S. Caecilia seems to have occurred between 379 and 464, so the two projects may have coincided or be connected in some way.[133] Whether the reconstruction of the bridge encouraged the building of the church or vice versa, or whether both are unconnected we cannot say for sure, but this is certainly another possible, albeit tentative, case of a civil project complimenting a Christian one.

The *vicus Patricius* project was initiated, as the inscription we have shows, by the Urban Prefect Valerius Messala. It is however unclear from the inscription whether this person is the Praetorian Prefect at the turn of the fifth century or his grandson Rufius, Urban Prefect shortly before 483 and sponsor of work on the Flavian amphitheatre.[134] It is certainly neat to tie in the restoration of this road with the restructuring of S. Pudenziana which began in 387/90 and was completed under Innocent I (401-17).[135] It would be wrong to do so merely for convenience, so any conclusions we come to must be speculative, but it would not be surprising if a new church building was further embellished by the reconstruction of the road outside it. What may militate against this is the fact that the Messala of the late fourth and early fifth century was a pagan.[136] What we will examine finally though may suggest that this was not necessarily a problem either.

One of the main examples of a building project we have used in this discussion is that of St. Paul's on the via Ostiense. With this construction we have the imperial prescript that initialised the building work, as well as the record of Symmachus' discussion of the problems surrounding it some years later, when he was Urban Prefect. More importantly for us here though, is that we know that the prefect in charge of this Christian project when it began was in fact a pagan. Sallustius Aventius is explicitly mentioned as the receiver of the prescript, and his religious affiliations are well known.[137] This is the only definitive evidence we have of such a scenario, but it seems likely that, with imperial Christian projects at least, the religious preferences of the prefect were irrelevant; one had to follow the emperors' orders. During the construction of St. Peter's, it is highly likely a pagan Urban Prefect took charge of the work at some

[133] Bridge- *LTUR* IV.111-2 & see n.18; church- *LTUR* I.206-7.
[134] *CIL* VI. 1775 & notes cf. *PLRE* II. Messala 3 & 4.
[135] *CBCR* III. 279-80.
[136] *PLRE* II. Messala 3.
[137] *PLRE* I. Sallustius 4. This work coincides with the removal of state funds for the pagan cults in 382 and therefore the new focus for the prefecture on Christian works (see n.11).

time, for example. The fact that most Christian building work was quasi-private and independent of the civil administration, meant such potentially conflicting circumstances were rare, with even apparently Christian prefects scarcely being involved. Most Christian building was done through papal or private initiation. In this way a pagan prefect could not have negatively affected the building or restoration of churches in the city, as they mostly lay outside his jurisdiction.

A question that arises from this is whether a pagan prefect was able to promote or increase work on pagan monuments. The answer to this seems to be yes, but only sporadically. Of the eight pagan projects we know about from the fourth century onwards, six are described as involving the civil administration. Of these, four mention the Urban Prefect, and it appears that he was the major instigator of them.[138] Three of these prefects were certainly pagan, but Faustus' restoration of a statue of Minerva in 472/3 could be a case of a Christian official looking beyond religion and recognising the aesthetic value of a piece of art. It would be fair to say though this was a minor probably pragmatic project, and religious preference does seem the prime motivation for such restorations at this time. It appears then that these prefects were able to instigate and promote significant pagan programmes. In general, the restoration of pagan elements of the city only took place under pagan prefects or private individuals, or by the Senate when most of its membership still worshipped the old gods. It would seem then, that without a pagan prefect such activity would have taken place even less frequently. The Senate only gets involved here on two occasions, both of which are of uncertain date, and private sponsorship was very rare due to the expense and the eventual ceasing of state funding. Consequently, for the pagan 'party', a prefect that shared their beliefs was the best way that their buildings would be preserved. Such hope disappeared in 382 when all state funding for the pagan cults was removed, and the prefect's remit was entirely focused on Christian buildings as a result.[139]

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[138] A temple of Apollo by Memmius Orfitus (357-9)-*CIL* VI. 45, *PLRE* I. Orfitus 3; the Portico *Dei Consentes* by Vettius Agorius Praetextatus (367-8)-*CIL* VI. 102, *PLRE* I. Praetextatus 1; the Portico *Bonus Eventus* by Claudius Hermogenianus Caesarius (374) - Amm. Marc. XXIX. 6.19, *PLRE* I. Caesarius 7; statue of Minerva by Anicius Acilius Aginatius Faustus (472/3)- CIL VI. 526, 1664, *PLRE* II. Faustus 4.

[139] See n.11.

1.6. Conclusion

In summary, this chapter shows us how the system for building and restoration in Rome allowed the Christian Church to act independently of the state, and to build in the location in the city it wished for its own evangelical purposes. This goes against the prevailing theory that the Church was dependent on private donations of money and land for such a decision, or occasional imperial sponsorship.

With the decline of Rome as the central city of the empire, and the commensurate increase in power and influence of the Church, the organisation behind the building and restoration of structures in the city also changed. We end up with a system by 331, where the Urban Prefect was in nominal charge of all building works, but his rare appearance in Christian building inscriptions, even after the reforms of 382, further indicates the Church's independence. The frequent appearance of the bishop, or a priest or priests, in church inscriptions implies again a parallel yet independent system for church building. The inscriptions elsewhere, describing the completion of civil or pagan structures, only serve to confuse the matter as to who was in charge of what, various officials or emperors appearing or disappearing seemingly at random, with no pattern emerging for a fixed hierarchy that organised and implemented repairs or constructions. There appears to be then an ad-hoc system in place for civic and pagan building or restoration work in Rome. This is in stark contrast to the Christian organisation, where the majority of new structures in this period sprang from, and where a consistent system is apparent. Within this, the bishop of the city could either carefully choose himself, or delegate the decision to a group of priests, the place where a new church was to be built. We will see in the following chapters why some of these locations may have been chosen.

2. *Churches and People*: The Importance of Visibility and Pilgrimage

A feature of some of the first Christian foundations in Rome is their faithfulness to the principles of visibility and accessibility. These are not new maxims for religious buildings, but merely the continuation of a pattern that we can see in the very first pagan temples that were built in the city. This chapter will seek to show how certain examples of early churches took on these two ideas, in the context of the existing pagan buildings around them. Christian builders were no doubt very aware of how important the locations of certain temples were in how they dominated the city, and the religious lives of its inhabitants. The principle that a building that is widely accessible or visible becomes important, and a mental and physical landmark for the populace, is one that builders of both temples and churches must have been aware of, and wished to utilise. Both Christianity and the many cults that characterised paganism, wanted their respective creeds to be widely worshipped and to be integral to city life. It would be fair to say that this was only vital for the 'official' pagan cults, where the security of the state was at stake, but many such cults would have wanted this. It should be accepted, however, that for a pagan politician or prominent local person, their first priority was for their investment to be widely visible and easily accessible for their own personal aggrandisement, and in order to better promote their civic generosity and munificence. The fact that this also meant that the cult represented became more popular and well known as a result, was a coincidental side-effect. Such an effect could have been the priority in the decision-making of the bishop, however, as the representative of the Roman Church, and as an important part in the creation of the first pilgrim routes in the city. Therefore, most Christian foundations need to be seen in a different way.[1] Christianity, which was an exclusivist and proselytising religion, required attendance and prominence amongst the wealth of pagan monuments that still represented most of the landscape of Rome in our period. I am arguing that the Christian builders and founders of the churches I will describe here had the same notion of how to make their foundations as important and well known as those donors who constructed many of the

[1] The opening chapter ('The Business of Building') makes it clear that for most church foundations, apart from imperial ventures, the bishop of Rome or one of his priests was in charge of the project. In this way, the majority of churches founded in the fourth or fifth centuries can be argued to have been deliberately and purposely built in certain locations in order to further Christianise the city and its population, as the bishop would have wished.

pagan temples in Rome. It was only their priorities for the cult they were building for that was different. I will look at the pagan examples where such rules were followed, as well as the Christian cases. A proper context, and possible inspiration, for the location of these churches will be provided.

As a general rule, it is apparent that pagan builders tended to concentrate their activity to hills and fora for visibility and prominence in the urban landscape, and Christian builders to main roads for accessibility and pilgrimage. There are exceptions to this, but it seems the overall pattern. Of course many churches, temples and shrines did not follow these two criteria, but this does not diminish our argument as other factors seem to have been at work with them, certainly with the Christian examples, as we will see.

I will confine my case studies to those where other explanations as to their placement are lacking or secondary, for example St. Peter's is not included because, although it sits on top of the Vatican hill, its location was determined by that of the apostle's tomb. Similarly, the Lateran is omitted as, in spite of the church lying on the *via Tusculana* just inside the city by the gate, its site was chosen because the church destroyed the barracks of the *equites singulares* who fought against Constantine at the battle of the Milvian Bridge. With our pagan illustrations the reasoning given for their chosen site is lost in myth, not unlike most Christian foundations. Like them, a need to mythologise such structures existed in the popular psyche, along with the foundation of the city itself and its location. We should be similarly sceptical of what they say about the temples. The pattern that emerges, which I will show, indicates a more prosaic reasoning for their locations based on visibility and accessibility through height and being situated in popular public areas. The site of some early temple buildings may have been determined by lightning strikes, thought to be a sign of divine will by many, which resulted in the land that was struck being declared public. High points are far more likely to be struck in this way, and so this may also explain the pattern. This cannot explain them all though, and it is only with the Temple of *Apollo Palatinus* that such a reasoning is expressly given.[2]

From the late antique Christian point of view these were buildings that still dominated the landscape of the city and the lives of many who lived there. The Church's desire to acquire the same prominence may have led its builders to follow the

[2] Suet. *Aug.* 29.3.

same maxims as to visibility and accessibility. More importantly for the Roman Church was attracting pilgrims, and creating a Christian city that would justify the claimed pre-eminence of the Roman see. Thus, the creation of churches alongside the main thoroughfares coming into and out of the city, alongside the invention of a specific Christian martyr mythology located in the same streets, seems an excellent way of doing this. Such a policy provided places for these visitors to pray and routes they could take during their pilgrimage to the relics or sites they had come to see. These routes and their accompanying mythology was formalised from the sixth century, with the appearance of the Martyr Acts and pilgrim itineraries. The fictitious hagiographies will be discussed later, but this whole process, as a reaction to the prominence of the pagan monuments in the city, began in the fourth century with the siting of many churches alongside the main arteries into and out of Rome. It meant the visitor, trader, or more importantly pilgrim, was now struck by the increasing Christianity of a place so steeped in pagan monuments and mythology.

A topic that needs to be discussed here, the implications of which will be analysed in the next chapter, is what constituted Christian space, and how the conception of pagan space compares to it. In other words, what was the definition of each and, in the context of this chapter, how do the ideas of visibility and accessibility relate to this?

2.1 Pagan and Christian Space: Definitions

The definitions of Christian and pagan space may seem obvious, but various ancient and modern discussions can leave us with some ambiguity. This is particularly the case as regards the concept of Christian space. A point of difficulty for us lies in the dramatic shift from the traditional Christian view that argued against the idea of holy places, and thus definable Christian space, to one where such places were embraced and incredibly popular. We move from a situation where the church hierarchy believed holy cities were only in heaven, where God cannot dwell in buildings but only in the hearts of men, to a situation where, after Constantine, we have a 'house of God' and churches built on martyrs graves and on places important in the life of Jesus. This radical shift has variously been argued to have been down to the precedent set by Constantine's churches built on historical Christian sites in Jerusalem, or a need by the fourth century

Church to commemorate the persecuted Church of the preceding centuries.[3] In any case, the huge popularity of pilgrimage to these new Christian holy places meant the 'utopian' views of Christian space held by Gregory of Nyssa, Eusebius and Augustine, for example, were increasingly out of step with the reality on the ground.[4] Modern discussion on the nature of Christian space has focused on *sacred* Christian spaces, that these did not exist before the fourth century, but that after that time these places were commemorated with a church or a shrine.[5] Churches without relics are not seen in the same category, but for our purposes it is logical that both sacred places and places for worship were Christian spaces.[6]

In any case, from the fourth century, visible, real, Christian space was inside a building, the utopian views of some Christian intellectuals were largely irrelevant for the ordinary worshipper. This 'interiority' contrasts starkly with space dedicated to the ancient pagan cults. The god or goddess resided in their temple or shrine within the cult statue, but paganism and its worship was everywhere in the ancient city and countryside, as the Christian and non-Christian writers noted.[7] Pagan sacred space was inside the temple or in a cave, grove or spring, but places of worship only required an altar or a statue, and usually did take place outside – in fact this benefited the ceremony and its efficacy. Although pagan temples had a strictly defined sacred area or sanctuary, or *templum*, around them, small shrines existed within the streets, squares, houses and places of entertainment throughout the city. As such any division between sacred and secular was in practice fairly illusory. Pagan space could not be avoided, especially in Rome where the pagan nature of the city was so intrinsic and potent, that much of this

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[3] Eg. Taylor J.E., *Christians and the Holy Places*, pp.306-17; Markus R.A., 'How on Earth Could Places Become Holy? Origins of the Christian Idea of Holy Places', *JECS* 2:3 (1994), pp.257-71.

[4] Greg. Nys., *Ep.*2; Eusebius, *Dem. Evang.* 4.12.4, 10.8.64; Augustine, *In Ioh. Ev. Tr.* X.1, *Serm.* 337.2, *Civ. Dei*, passim – all deriving from the words of St. Paul (Acts 17.24). For a more detailed examination of these, and other writers', sometimes inconsistent beliefs on this matter, and the evolution of these principles see Bitton-Ashkelony B., *Encountering the Sacred: The Debate on Christian Pilgrimage in Late Antiquity*. For the distinction between 'locative' and 'utopian' views of sanctity see Smith J.Z., *Map is Not Territory*, pp.88ff.

[5] Eg. Smith J.Z., *To Take Place*, pp.103, 105.

[6] The fact that studies of Christian space itself concentrate on church space shows this logic, eg. Clark D.L.C., 'Viewing the Liturgy: A Space Syntax Study of Changing Visibility and Accessibility in the Development of the Byzantine Church in Jordan' in *World Archaeology* 39.1 (2007), pp.84-104; Spieser J-M., 'Portes, limites et organisation de l'espace dans les églises paléochrétiennes', *Klio* 77 (1995), pp.433-45.

[7] Eg. Cicero, *De Nat. Deo.* III.40; Tert., *De Spect.* VIII; Augustine, *Ep.* XVII.4; modern discussion of pagan space is inconsistent. For example, Michele Salzman ('The Christianisation of Sacred Time and Sacred Space' in Harris W.V., *The Transformations of Urbs Roma in Late Antiquity*, pp.123-34) accepts the fluidity and differing notion of pagan sacred space (p.123), but proceeds to categorise it as simply

landscape endured well into the sixth century.[8] A story told by Augustine of a converted pagan not seeing the need to go to a church to worship, could be an indication of the different perceptions of religious space between Christians and pagans.[9]

The reality, from the fourth century, was soon acknowledged and taken on by various bishops, including those at Rome, that Christian space was now definable and earthly, and, in practice, enclosed. Cyril of Jerusalem, Paulinus of Nola and especially Damasus at Rome all embraced the cult of martyrs and the sanctification of earthly places that went with this.[10] The question this poses, therefore, is how does this interiority of Christian space tally with the desire by various Roman bishops to make Rome a Christian city, with its churches being visible and accessible? What we see, I believe, is Eusebius' and others' theological idealism soon being replaced with pragmatism, and an acknowledgement that to compete with paganism and bring over its adherents to the 'true way', was to compete for space. As we will see, I will argue that the construction of several churches along a road that leads from the site of a martyr's tomb signposts this road as a Christian pilgrim route. The veneration of the tomb almost certainly preceded the creation of the churches on the road leading to it, but these Christian centres monumentalised it, and informed the viewer of its Christian nature. This attempt to make Christianity and its 'space' less insular and hidden could in fact be a re-interpretation of Augustine's and others' idea of the Christian God being unconfinable and omnipresent, and showing this in a visual and more coherent earthly way for the average Christian. It may have been part of turning a theological concept into an earthly verity.

The natural extension of this idea was the establishment of Christian processions in the streets, which seem to have begun in Rome in the late sixth century.[11] This

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within temples and shrines. Yet, Robert Markus (*The End of Ancient Christianity*, p.141) recognises that sacred spaces occurred everywhere in the Roman city.

[8] The poet Claudian, writing in the early fifth century, still defines Rome by its temples - Long J., 'Claudian and the City: Poetry and Pride of Place' in Ehlers W-W., Felgentreu F., Wheeler S.M. (eds.), *Aetas Claudianea*, pp.10-14.

[9] Augustine, *Confess.*, VIII.2.3-4 where a Victorinus famously asks "Do walls make Christians?"

[10] Cyril, *Catech.* XIII.22; Paulinus: see p.26 n.43; Damasus' extensive promotion of the Roman martyr cults and his strategic church building programme testifies to the importance he placed on this phenomenon, and this will be examined later. Ambrose at Milan was also central to the building of two major churches there, both of which were associated with martyrs, and bishop-led church building was important at Ravenna – Spieser J-M., 'Ambrose's Foundations at Milan and the Question of Martyria' in *Urban and Religious Spaces in Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium*, VII.5-8; Ward-Perkins B., *From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, pp. 242-3 with refs.

[11] See p.94 n.4. Rome's stational liturgy, where certain celebrations and feast days were presided over by the bishop in specified locations in or around the city, a practice that may have originated in the second

formally brought Christianity out of the church, and made it, at least temporarily, an externalised religion. This was all part of the Church's move to take on the popular elements of the pagan cults for its own benefit: processions, pilgrimage, the sanctity of objects and places and popular participation being these central elements.

The importance of visibility and accessibility is apparent for all builders in the ancient and late antique world. The value in building an impressive temple that was widely visible as well as the Christian need for church attendance and visiting pilgrims, can be seen in the written sources. It is these factors that determined the placement of the religious buildings I will describe below, so an examination of the sources that describe such motives is appropriate before attending to the examples themselves.

2.2. The Written Sources

The ancient sources give us a few passages that suggest that ancient builders, and people in general, were both very aware of the importance of location for buildings.[12] Also, there are many that show how the Christian Church saw how vital attendance and widespread observance of its rituals was for its popularity, and thus a sign of its success. In this way, we should not be surprised in turn if Christian builders thought the same way as their pagan predecessors about the importance of location. Similarly, the Church would have been eager to do anything that would encourage the attendance and popularity it knew it needed to survive and flourish.

It is in Vitruvius that we first see the importance for the architect of location for temples. It is worth quoting the relevant passages in full:

"The temples of the gods, protectors of the city, also those of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, should be on some eminence which commands a view of the greater part of the city. The temple of Mercury should be either in the forum, or, as also the temple of Isis and Serapis, in the great public square. Those of Apollo and Father Bacchus near the theatre. If there be neither amphitheatre nor gymnasium, the temple of Hercules should be near the circus.... The temple of Ceres should be in a solitary spot out of the

century and became a formal system in the late fifth century (Baldovin J.F., *The Urban Character of Christian Worship*, pp.145-53), still meant Christian practice, albeit now mobile, was still internalised.

[12] Cicero, *De domo sua*, 116, *Ad Att.* XII.19-52 passim; Pliny, *Ep.* II.17.5, 21, 27; Statius. *Silv.* I.3, II.2.

city, to which the public are not necessarily led but for the purpose of sacrificing to her."[13] (Trans. J. Gwilt)

Also, Vitruvius, after suggesting that all temples should face west (a maxim rarely followed in fact), describes other priorities for the location of a temple:

"But if the nature of the place does not permit this, the temple is to be turned as much as possible, so that the greater part of the city may be seen from it. Moreover, if temples be built on the banks of a river, as those in Egypt on the Nile, they should face the river. So, also, if temples of the gods be erected on the road side, they should be placed in such a manner that those passing by may look towards them, and make their obeisance."[14] (Trans. J. Gwilt)

Although Vitruvius cannot speak for all ancient architects, these passages can tell us a number of things. Firstly, that it was a conscious decision and desirable for temples to be built in prominent areas, and for those buildings to have a visual impact on the inhabitants of the city. Secondly, it was seen as appropriate that some of these should be in areas that were widely visited by the public, that is in areas of general congregation such as squares, circuses and theatres, or next to roads. Temples and churches in relation to theatres and circuses will be dealt with in chapter four, but for now it is enough that the pattern of temples being situated in the city so as to be widely visible and accessible is appreciated. Equally, Vitruvius, when referring to the temple of Ceres, implies that some temples were indeed located in such a way that the people of the city were drawn to them, Ceres' temple being one of the exceptions. He does, however, mention certain temples which should be located in more isolated areas, but presumably still visually arresting ones, because of the nature of the deity. It has to be said also that the main temples in Rome were built hundreds of years before Vitruvius

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[13] Vitruvius, *De Arch.* I.7.1-2: *"aedibus vero sacris, quorum deorum maxime in tutela civitas videtur esse, et Iovi et Iunoni et Minervae in excelsissimo loco unde moenium maxima pars conspiciatur areae distribuantur. Mercurio autem in foro, aut etiam ut Isidi et Serapi in emporio, Apollini Patrique Libero secundum theatrum, Herculi in quibus civitatibus non sunt gymnasia neque amphitheatra ad circum...item Cereri extra urbem loco, quo non omnes semper homines nisi per sacrificium necesse habeant adire."*

[14] Vitruvius, De Arch. IV.5.2: *"sin autem loci natura interpellaverit, tunc convertendae sunt earum regionum constitutiones, uti quam plurima pars moenium e templis deorum conspiciatur. item si secundum flumina aedes sacrae fient, ita uti Aegypto circa Nilum, ad fluminis ripas videntur spectare*

was writing, but there is no good reason to think that architects then did not think in the same terms. He may have been simply repeating long held guidelines. Further, although Vitruvius' rules were not rigidly followed everywhere, and other architects may have had different criteria they went by, what this source does show is that architects did appreciate, and consciously take into account, location as a factor in their building projects. Is it not likely that later Christian builders did the same?

The late antique poet Claudian also appreciated the visual impact of pagan temples, something, as we have seen, that was intended. Although a pagan working in the Christian court of the late fourth and early fifth century, Claudian has no issues with lovingly describing the Rome of this period in pagan mythological terms. In his panegyric in celebration of the sixth consulship of the emperor Honorius in 404, there is a passage which wonderfully describes the visual dominance the temples had on Rome even by this time. Although exaggeration is likely here due to Claudian's own religious inclinations, the obvious grandeur and impact, in this case the Palatine temples, must have had on the city cannot be denied. Again the relevant passage is worth quoting in full:

"Of a truth no other city could fitly be the home of the world's rulers; on this hill is majesty most herself, and knows the height of her supreme sway; the palace, raising its head above the forum that lies at its feet, sees around it so many temples and is surrounded by so many protecting deities. See below the Thunderer's temple the Giants suspended from the Tarpeian rock, behold the sculptured doors, the cloud-capped statues, the sky-towering temples, the brazen prows of many a vessel welded on to lofty columns, the temples built on massy crags where the hand of man has added to the work of nature, the countless triumphal arches glittering with spoils. The eyes are dazed by the blaze of metal and blink out wearied by the surrounding gold."[15] (Trans. M. Platnauer)

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debere. similiter si circum vias publicas erunt aedificia deorum, ita constituantur uti praetereuntes possint respicere et in conspectu salutationes facere."

[15] Claudian, *Pan. De Sex. Cos. Hon.* 39-52: *"Non alium certe decuit rectoribus orbis esse larem, nulloque magis se colle potestas aestimat et summi sentit fastigia iuris; attollens apicem subiectis regia rostris tot circum delubra videt tantisque deorum cingitur excubiis! iuvat infra tecta Tonantis cernere Tarpeia pendentes rupe Gigantas caelatasque fores mediisque volantia signa nubibus et densum stipantibus aethera templis aeraque vestitis numerosa puppe columnis consita subnixasque iugis inmanibus aedes, naturam cumulante manu, spoliisque micantes innumeros arcus. acies stupet igne metalli et circumfuso trepidans obtunditur auro."*

In other words, it is the temples' height and position that gives them their impact and makes them a landmark, as well as providing them with an importance and prominence they would not otherwise have. The importance of this for deities that were to protect the city and its inhabitants is obvious. This protective role was of course something the Christians wanted to emulate for Christ. In order for Christianity to overcome the physical and mental dominance the old gods retained within the urban environment, the Church knew it had to become more popular than the pagan cults. Such success could only be measured by the number of worshippers attending church and visiting the tombs of the martyrs. This need for 'attendance' can be seen in the sources below.

Salvian, the Gallic monk and priest writing in the fifth century, is clearly concerned about the falling numbers attending services. He bemoans the fact that church attendance suffers because of the unhealthy draw the entertainments have.[16]

A sermon by Leo I, probably in 442, states very clearly his own disappointment and fear due to their being only a small congregation in front of him on the anniversary of a sack of the city, presumably that of 410. He sees this as a worrying ungratefulness to God for delivering them, and attributes this to the games, which he says are more popular than services at the martyr churches.[17] The specific competition with the games will be dealt with in chapter four. It is sufficient to say for now that we can see the obvious connection Leo makes with church attendance and Christianity's success in the city. He was no doubt genuinely worried for the souls of those not attending Christian services and going to the games instead, but he also knew the Church had to find ways to attract people back for it to survive as an institution. His particular mention of *martyria* in reference to this problem seems to indicate that it was Rome's Christian history and attraction for pilgrims that was the main draw for worshippers, within and outside the city. Leo's own construction of a basilica to the bishop of the city and martyr Cornelius, on the *via Appia*, may have been an attempt by him to restore this popularity.[18] In this context, the pattern of many intra-mural churches being built on the main roads that led to these extra-mural martyr churches, is unlikely to be a coincidence.

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[16] Salvian, *De Gubernatione Dei,* VI.36-8.
[17] Leo, *Sermo* 85.1. This 'ungratefulness' may also stem from the period of time that has lapsed since the sack, or the fact that the 'barbarian' still managed to pillage the city to some extent, in spite of God.
[18] *LP* I. 239.

Various laws, also recognising the popularity of the games, try and separate days that contained *ludi* from those for church-going in an attempt to encourage the congregations to return.[19] These laws are a sign of defeat on the part of the Church, indicating that they cannot compete with the circus or the theatre, but they also show once more the importance for the Church as an institution of good attendance at its services and celebrations.

Recent scholarship has seen the role of the bishop and Christian leader not as a new role and development, but rather a continuation of the traditions of the pagan elite towards the town or city they were prominent in. That is to say, the fourth and fifth century bishop is increasingly being seen as someone who required and desired the popularity for their local cult in the same way that the pagan elite continued to need public acclaim and approval themselves. Jill Harries, in a recent article, compares the pagan senator Symmachus and his attempts to produce large spectacular games for his son Memmius, to Paulinus of Nola and his promotion of his local saint Felix. For the Christian priest the popularity gained for himself and his town would be through a local saint, for Symmachus, and other pagan aristocrats, it was through games.[20] In Rome the local saints and cults were multifarious of course, but centred on Peter, Paul and Lawrence.

What also provided public favour was building, and again both Christian and pagan civic leaders took part in this. Once more, for the Christian leader such popularity was via a local saint and their associated cult, that is in Rome to build a church dedicated to St. Lawrence or another local martyr. This would show them to be a worthy local dignitary, a powerful individual especially if the project was a large one, and a good Christian. A pagan senator building a temple would be a good comparison, although whether the particular god's popularity rose as a result was incidental. In Rome, the bishop confined himself to church building and other religious matters until the sixth and seventh centuries, but in other towns and cities where a coherent governmental body like the senate did not continue to exist, we see local bishops take on roles not dissimilar to a provincial governor. In any case, civic virtue played a leading role in a bishop's actions, and with his building projects this was manifest.[21] His

[19] *Cod. Theod.* II.8.23-5, XV.5.2 & 5.
[20] Harries J. 'Favor Populi: Pagans Christians and Public Entertainment in Late Antique Italy' in Lomas K. & Cornell T. (eds.), *Bread and Circuses*, pp.125-141.
[21] Rapp C., *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity*, pp.220-3.

own popular approval and success could only be guaranteed if the buildings he built were also popular with the public and were remembered, the one following the other. In this way, the visibility and easy accessibility of the church or churches he built would be important so as to encourage them to be frequently visited and to become well-known. If they were widely visible as well this would make them an important landmark. All this would of course increase the prestige of the individual who built or commissioned them, that is the bishop. As such, an appropriate choice of location for a church building project, taking into account these two maxims, would have been of great benefit to the bishop. Such decisions would also encourage more pilgrims or local visitors to the town or city, something that would again reflect well on the bishop there and increase his and the city's prominence. With Rome's aim to become the pre-eminent bishopric in the Christian world, such a policy would have been sensible.

The sources show us then the importance of religious buildings for the ancient city. Also, the importance of both pagan and Christian structures for its prominent citizens comes through. The value of visibility and accessibility in a church's location for the fourth and fifth century bishops of Rome is thus obvious, and the popularity of the churches was crucial as a marker of success vis-à-vis the pagan temples and shrines.[22] The siting of many churches along main roads was in order to create popular pilgrim routes. This would also allow visitors and locals to easily find these churches, as well as encouraging people to attend the services there. This would all reflect well on the builder, the bishop. To put their foundations into context we need to look at the pre-existing pagan buildings of Rome that also followed the principles of visibility and accessibility, and were as such the inspiration for the Christian foundations I will describe later.

2.3. Case Studies

2.3.1. Pagan Temples

The need for attendance in the pagan sphere was subtly different in comparison to Christianity – a passive participation often outside, as opposed to a more active

[22] Their contrasting fortunes are gleefully described by Jerome, albeit in an exaggerated fashion- see n.39.

participation inside. Nevertheless, visibility and the need to be in the consciousness of the city's population were still important, which explains the common feature of a temple on a hill, dominating, mentally and visually, the city below. The relative absence of important examples from the main thoroughfares into Rome may reflect the local nature of civic pagan worship. The temples were for the inhabitants of the city not visitors coming in. However, we will begin by looking at the one exception to this that we know of, which is, interestingly, a foreign cult.

The Temple of Sol by the via Flaminia/Lata

The *via Flaminia* was the main road into Rome from the north and dates to the third century BC, constructed in 223 or 220 BC by C. Flaminius. During the empire it seems to have been the route of choice for Spanish or Gaulish visitors.[23] The road began at the *porta Fontinalis* in the Servian wall and ended in Ariminum via the Milvian bridge. From the late Republic the road was used as a showcase for aristocratic familial monuments and for later imperial propagandistic structures. These took the form of elaborate tombs, and under Augustus, who took a special interest in the road, of various major projects. This included a complete restoration of the road, the construction of various triumphal arches along it and the building of an enormous Mausoleum, an altar dedicated to peace and a monumental sundial along its right hand side as one entered the city. These were clearly elements designed to be seen, and to put them alongside such a major road would ensure this. The *via Flaminia*'s use as a triumphal route provided the main symbolic reasoning for them being situated here. Several arches were built along it by Claudius and Diocletian, along with the columns of Marcus Aurelius and that of Trajan at its end. From the second century AD various *insulae* were built alongside the road, and with the construction of the Aurelianic wall in the late third century a stretch of the road was now officially inside the city. This part of it became known as the *via Lata*. By late antiquity the roads use as the main conduit for goods from the north, because of the location of the customs boundary at the new *porta Flaminia*, was reflected in the existence next to the road of the *catubulum*, the *forum suarium* and the stores for the city's free wine situated in the *templum solis*.[24]

[23] Festus, *De Verb. Sig.*, 'Flaminius'; Livy, *Perioch.* 20; Plut. *Quae. Rom.*66; *CIL* XI. 3281-4.
[24] *LTUR* V.135-7.

This temple is the only convincing example we have of a large pagan centre being situated on a main road. The temple was constructed alongside the *via Flaminia*, soon to be the *via Lata*, in the 270s by Aurelian. Its exact axis is a matter of debate, that is whether it lay north north-west/south south-east, so parallel with the road itself, or east/west and perpendicular to it.[25] **(Fig.2a)** Either way, a connection with this important thoroughfare is obvious, and its large size combined with its location would have certainly meant it soon became a significant mental and physical landmark for the city's population, and for visitors from the north-west on entering the city. It seems probable therefore that Aurelian intended this, to bring notoriety, prestige and popularity to his new cult to which he was devoted. The newness of the cult of *Sol Invictus* in the 270s to Rome would have meant a location which would have encouraged it to be taken on by Rome's populace is likely to have been a priority for Aurelian, an emperor who intimately connected worship of the gods with the survival and health of the empire. The fact that he built, or was completing, the new wall that circumnavigated the city at the same time may also indicate that this construction determined the location of the temple. That is, by providing a new gate, the *Porta Flaminia*, and entrance to the city from the north-west, at the same time as building this new cult centre, there is an argument for saying the first project determined the location for the second.

Aurelian may have wanted to create, therefore, a major cult centre for *Sol Invictus*, which for him was associated with military success, in the capital of the empire, in which Rome's inhabitants and visitors from elsewhere, more particularly from the north, would be encouraged to attend. This would, in his eyes, be one of the ways that would increase the likelihood of the empire's survival in a time of great military and imperial crisis. This would ensure the *pax deorum*, vital for such a situation, of which the worship of the exclusivist Christian god was a threat. The irony, therefore, of a Christian church to St. Lawrence being built just across the road about a century later would not have been lost on him.[26]

We will now turn our attention to the more typical and frequent motif of a pagan temple on a hill, constructed there both to be highly visible and provide an important

[25] *LTUR* IV.331-3.
[26] This church will be discussed later in this chapter. Its possible relationship to the Temple of Sol will be discussed in chapter 3.

mental landmark. Consequently, these temples became integral parts of religious and civic city life, something Christianity and its churches wished to address.

The Temples to Victory, the Great Mother and Apollo on the Palatine Hill **(Fig.2b)**

All of these temples lay in the south-west corner of the hill, so dominating the view north from the Circus Maximus and the Aventine areas of the city, and the view looking south-east from the Campus Martius to the Vatican hill. Elsewhere in Rome the view of them would have been obscured by other hills or the other buildings on the Palatine itself. This area of the hill is the most well-known, it being extensively excavated, and with Renaissance and later stone-robbers exposing more ancient remains in the vicinity.

The hill itself was the original site of Rome according to tradition, Romulus ploughing around it and creating the first *pomerium*. The south-west corner of the hill was devoted to this foundation story, with the *casa Romuli* and *Lupercal* both situated in the area.[27] It is not surprising then that Augustus decided to live here, he himself wanting to be thought of as the second founder of a new Rome, a key element of his propagandistic programme. The first temple in this area we will examine was linked to the Emperor's house, and we will see how its prominence and visuality was part of his own self-promotion.

The Temple to Apollo, completed and dedicated by the future Augustus in 28BC for his victory against Sextus Pompey eight years earlier, was built on the grounds of his house, the two being connected by a ramp. It has been more securely placed in this area after many believed it lay just to the south of Domitian's palace in the north-eastern part of the hill. The temple in that area is now thought to date from the AD 170s, so far too late for Octavian's construction. The discovery of Apolline cultic objects in the south-west part of the hill has confirmed its identity there, the temple in this area once being thought to have been the Temple of Jupiter Victor. The Temple of Apollo was considered the finest of Augustus' foundations, and is commented on by ancient authors with great praise. We know from literary and archaeological evidence that it stood on a ten foot high platform and was highly decorative, as well as being constructed from the

[27] For the geography and entire history of the hill from the Archaic period to the early middle ages see *LTUR* IV. 12-40.

finest materials. Its natural position, with the addition of an artificial platform, meant it would have dominated visually the whole area and have been widely visible, especially from the Murcian valley below containing the Circus Maximus.[28] This seems the clear intention of Augustus for a temple that was an important piece of propaganda for him.

In the long-term, the temple would still have been the dominant landmark of this part of the city up until late antiquity and probably beyond. There seems to be some uncertainty as to its existence beyond the mid-fourth century however. Ammianus may be referring to it burning down in 363, and many argue for it disappearing then, yet it appears in the *Curiosum*, one of the regionary catalogues that could date as late as the early fifth century.[29] It seems likely though the temple survived in some form until the end of the fourth century simply because of its notoriety, great beauty and visual impact. It is likely that the beleaguered pagan senators of the fourth century would have found a way of restoring such a prestigious symbol of pagan power and history. The words of Claudian in 404 do suggest this and other temples' continued existence on the Palatine.[30] Whatever the case, up until its disappearance from the hill, it was one of the most prominent temples in the city because of its location and visibility, a fact that may have contributed to the fire of 363 perhaps. The Christian authorities in Rome in the fourth century would certainly have regarded it as a symbol of what they despised but an inspiration as to what they aspired to. That is, a religious building that dominated the city both visually, and as a result mentally, put the cult it represented at the forefront of the minds of the population.

The temples to the Great Mother and to Victory were situated next to each other in the promontory right in the south-west tip of the hill. The exact identification of each one is still uncertain, but it is currently thought the western-most example is that of *Magna Mater*. **(Fig.2c)** Remains of a statue to her were discovered in the area in the nineteenth century and further cult objects from her temple in the mid-twentieth. The temple was begun in 204 BC and completed in 191 BC, and known to be part of the precinct of Victory, thus confirming the two temples proximity and Victory's more ancient origins. The final phase of reconstruction for the temple to the Great Mother

[28] Claridge A., *Rome*, p.121; *LTUR* I. 54-7; Vell. Pat. 2.81.3; Prop. 2.31.9, 11-14; Ovid, *Tristia* 3.1.59-60.
[29] Amm. Marc. XXIII.3.3; *Cur.* X. 5 – Nordh, p.89.11. It appears with the temple to the Great Mother as *Apollinis Ramnusi* referring to some equestrian links (*ramnes*), or perhaps the original location of the cult statue from Rhamnous. It could also be referring to the name of a later restorer *after* the fire of 363.
[30] See n.15.

appears to have been in the Augustan era after a fire. It survived into the fourth century.[31]

The temple to Victory is, as we have said, next to that of *Magna Mater* and much older. Unlike its neighbour much of the podium does not survive but its foundations do, and show a temple of roughly the same size. It was dedicated in 294 BC and remains have been found of later restorations. It held the black stone of Cybele, when it arrived in 204 BC, for the duration of the construction of her temple a few yards away. There was very likely to have been a more ancient shrine to Victory on this site, which is described as being on the summit of the hill. It survived into the fourth century at least, and is called *Victoria Germaniciana* or *Germaniana*, perhaps a reference to a later restoration by an emperor or member of the imperial family who had received such an appellation.[32] The temple is also mentioned by the Christian author Prudentius, who describes a large, and perhaps very visible, statue to the goddess as well.[33]

All three temples then commanded a dominant position in the city, being highly visible over a wide area. The importance of this triad of sanctuaries for Rome may explain their location. Victory was a powerful and important goddess for the Romans, especially at the time of her temples' foundation, during the Roman conquests of Italy. Her temple was probably situated on a more ancient cultic site given over to her worship. The existence of the *Magna Mater* in Rome is linked to a prophecy of the Sibylline books and the successful end of the second Punic war. That of Apollo was tied to the new principate regime brought in by Augustus, which brought an end to the continual civil wars of the late Republic. So all three were symbolic of Roman success and triumph, and so their obvious visual dominance over much of the urban landscape of Rome meant that symbolism was all the more powerful. It is therefore highly likely such visibility was intended by the builders involved for that reason. Even if the original meaning and identity of the three was lost on most viewers by late antiquity, by this time they still were obviously pagan monuments that some one of the city's most prominent landmarks. As such, for the visitor and many inhabitants of Rome even into the mid-fifth century, it was still a powerfully pagan city. The Christian authorities knew it had to match the prominence of these pagan structures if it was truly able to say, and convince others, that Rome was now Christian.

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[31] *LTUR* III. 206-8; Livy, 29.14.5-14, 29.37.2-3, 36.36.3-5; *Not./Cur.* X. – Nordh, p.89.10.
[32] *LTUR* V. 149-50; Livy, 10.33.9, 29.14.13; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.32-3; *Not./Cur.* X. – Nordh, p.90.6.
[33] Prud. *Contra Symm.*, II.27-29.

The Temples of Jupiter Maximus and Juno Moneta on the Capitoline Hill **(Fig.2d)**

The Temple of Jupiter was perhaps the most obvious case in Rome of the phenomenon of a temple on a hill. It was situated on the lower crest of the Capitoline and was dedicated, according to tradition at least, to Jupiter, Juno and Minerva in 509/8 BC, the first year of the Republic.[34] This height, according to later sources, was already a religious area full of shrines and temples before the construction of the temple to Jupiter.[35] Archaeology has found evidence for continuous occupation of the hill from as early as the fourteenth century BC perhaps, with remains of many buildings found, the exact nature of these being unknown. Evidence of a possible temple of the first half of the sixth century BC has been found on the southern slope of the hill above the *clivus Capitolinus*, and the remains of a small temple of the same period was discovered in the area of the Casa della Protomoteca and Cortile dell'Avvocatura.[36] The religiosity of the hill from very early times, which the sources comment on, seems likely then, probably due to its connection with an early village, the Sabine war and its use as a royal residence. The lack of any later phases beyond the sixth century BC for these remains implies their destruction or abandonment at that time, the period when the Temple of Jupiter was said to have been built. Thus, to go to the trouble of removing or deserting all these buildings and levelling the site for the temple, implies that it was an attractive desirable location that was purposely chosen, precisely because of its height and position opposite the Palatine and next to the Forum[37]; the location of the temple being directly proportional to its importance. It was consistently added to, including entire rebuildings, after its destruction in fires of 83 BC and AD 69.[38] It was intact in the fourth century and still impressive to the viewer, its final dismantlement a slow process, only begun in the fifth century, with Stilicho removing the gold from its doors. It was still a magnificent and impressive sight in the sixth century.[39] Thus for our period, the

[34] Livy 2.6-8; Polybius 3.22.1.
[35] Livy 1.55.2-5; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 3.69.4-6; Lact. *Inst.* 1.20.38; Aug. *Civ. Dei*, IV.23- the latter two sources show Christian knowledge of the site as well as acknowledgement of its importance. They also indicate that the temple was viewed by the Christian elite as a symbol of 'paganism'.
[36] *LTUR* I. 230-1.
[37] Dionysius of Halicarnassus comments on the difficulty of building here but attributes the choice of site to an augury (*Ant. Rom.* 3.69.1-4). The auguries always seemed to choose a hill though. Perhaps the gods also wanted their temple to be seen, but more credibly so did the king.
[38] Tacitus, *Hist.* 3.72.
[39] Amm. Marc. XXII.16.12; Zosimus, V.38.5; Procopius *Bell. Vand.* 1.5.4; Cassiodorus, *Variae* 7.6.1 cf. Jerome, *Ep.*107.1 where he describes this temple and others as in a poor state or in ruins. This was a

temple, as was intended, still dominated the city mentally and visually, even in Christian times. It became more than just a temple, it was a symbol of Roman greatness as those involved in its first construction and later embellishments and reconstructions were fully aware of.

This was probably the most prominent and visually arresting landmark in Rome, even in late antiquity. Its position as a symbol of Roman power and success was no doubt the reason for its location and size. It also meant the temple went beyond religion and was in that sense untouchable. As a result, it would be something the Christian authorities would want to replicate. That is, a church that was an equally important landmark within the city, but also a symbol of Christian power and a signal of its new place as the imperially favoured religion. With Christianity's adoption as the official state religion under Theodosius I, it meant Christ in effect supplanted Jupiter. Thus to rival or supersede Jupiter's temple on the Capitoline visually, would have been a powerfully symbolic step towards clarifying Christianity's new importance to the population of Rome. We will examine the possible candidate that tried to achieve this later in the chapter.

The Temple of Juno Moneta is thought to have existed on the upper crest of the Capitoline, known as the *arx*, at the north-west corner of the hill. It was said to have been completed and dedicated in 344 BC, but there is evidence to think a temple or shrine existed on the same spot prior to this. Walls and foundations have been unearthed on this site that have been linked to the temple, although no cult materials have been found, so any identification cannot be definitive.[40] The fact that the area is now occupied by S. Maria in Aracaeoli may be the reason for the lack of cult items, although its use as the mint from the third century BC until the early imperial period makes the lack of any coin finds very puzzling.[41] The temple disappears from the written record after this, so there is no guarantee it survived as part of the late antique city. The removal of the mint and its modest size in comparison to the Temple of Jupiter may be the reason for this, but its extremely prominent site and ancient origins make it an unlikely casualty. The *Iunonalia* still took place in the city in the mid-fourth century so

literary tool for his own purposes, and does not appear to have been a reflection of reality. Again, the temple is used to represent the worship of the old gods.

[40] Livy 7.28.3-7; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 13.7.3-*LTUR* III. 123-5.

[41] Suidas, '*Μονήτα*'; Cicero, *Ad. Att.* 8.7.3; Livy 6.20.13; The mint moved to a site near to S. Clemente some time in the first century- *LTUR* III. 280-1.

the temple may still have existed then.[42] In any case, its great visibility, higher even than Jupiter's temple and facing the wide flat Campus Martius, would have certainly made it another landmark. Again, this temple would have been seen as another example of how paganism still dominated the landscape of the city, and a model of how this was done.

The Temples of Diana and Minerva on the Aventine Hill **(Fig.2e)**

The temple of Diana was said to have been originally built by Servius Tullius, it was reconstructed under Augustus.[43] It was certainly of great age and so was originally built amongst open land. Thus its placement at the top of the Aventine was clearly deliberately chosen. As such, it may still have dominated the view south from the centre of Rome in spite of the houses and *insulae* that had later grown around it. It would have dominated the view looking east from across the Tiber as well, as there was, and still is, a sharp drop from the hill to the river. Indeed, this prominence led to the hill being known, at least in early imperial times, as the *collis Dianae*.[44] It certainly survived into the fourth century, but its precise location is now unknown.[45] However, the story of C. Gracchus using the temple as a refuge, could indicate that it was at the highest point of the hill, and so ideal for that purpose. It is thought to have lain between the churches of S. Sabina, S. Alessio and S. Prisca.[46]

In the fourth century regionary lists it is associated with a Temple to Minerva, which suggests the two were close together. We don't know when Minerva's temple was first constructed, but it was certainly in place by the third century BC, and we hear of its reconstruction under Augustus.[47] In spite of recent excavations its location has not been confirmed, but a location overlooking the Circus Maximus in the north-west part of the hill – the steepest and highest part of the Aventine – by that of Diana's temple, seems the most probable place.[48]

The two temples' likely location then at the highest point of the hill, coupled with their age, makes the choice of site for them appear deliberate. It was to consciously

[42] Calendar of 354- Degrassi (ed.), *Inscr. Ital.* XIII.2. 242-3.
[43] Livy, 1.45.2-6; Suet. *Aug.* 29.5.
[44] Mart. 12.18.3; 7.73.1.
[45] *Not./Cur.* XIII.- Nordh, p.94.3
[46] *LTUR* II.12-3.
[47] Festus, *De Verb. Sig.*,'scribas'; Aug. *Res Gest.* 19.
[48] *LTUR* III.254.

ensure they were important and highly visible memorials to their builders, in the short term. In the long term, and certainly by late antiquity, their impact was once more to emphasise the pagan nature of the city, a fact that was a fly in the ointment for the Roman Church after its acceptance and eventual official adoption by the state.

2.3.2. Christian Churches

The pagan examples we have just examined shows a clear correlation between pagan centres and hills in the city. This meant the landmarks of Rome were temples, and indicated to the population the intrinsically pagan nature of the place. As we will see now this provided a template for several fifth century Christian intra-mural foundations, which would attempt to rival them as mental and visual signposts, and ensure that Rome became known as a Christian city. The fifth century was a time when paganism was effectively illegal and Christian confidence had grown as a result, so such projects were clear statements of intent in this atmosphere.

What is a more frequent phenomenon is the placement of many churches on the main roads that lead into the city; there are seven clear examples of this. From what we have said about the importance of attendance and pilgrimage for these centres, and Rome itself, this seems a policy both of encouraging such attendance in visitors to the city and to remind those visitors that they were entering a Christian environment. More importantly, we also begin to see the deliberate creation of several 'paths of pilgrimage' throughout Rome as a result, directed by the location of these churches, their relics, and the tombs of the martyrs outside the city. **(see Fig. 1a)**

Although these churches in Rome sought to and succeeded in impacting on public space, that is being part of a pilgrim route on one the main roads of the city, rather than the imperial fora or squares which were still the preserve of the temples, the majority of Christian centres in Rome were small and architecturally modest. They must have been made distinguishable from other buildings in the city so they could be found by worshippers - the basilical hall was a common building type - but we have no evidence how this was done and the earliest images of the exterior of these churches are from medieval maps, by which time their façade may have altered considerably. We cannot assume the brick structures of these first churches that do survive were unclad or

had no other architectural ornament. As such, we have no good idea to what extent these smaller churches attempted to impose themselves visually on the landscape, only that they were an identifiable Christian building that lay next to an important busy road. It is not until the fifth century that we get large churches built by bishops in the city itself, which use a lofty location to impose themselves visually on the city. Even here our knowledge of their original exterior decoration is limited, but their location is enough for us to acknowledge their prominent visuality. As a result, we cannot say whether the smaller churches along the pilgrim routes were especially visible, it is their accessibility for pilgrims and general passers-by that provides us with a safer focus for our discussion of them. With the larger churches built on the hills of the city we can be more confident discussing their prominent visuality. We will begin, however, by looking at these smaller 'pilgrimage churches'.

Titulus Iulii trans Tiberim & S. Chrysogoni along the Via Aurelia

Our first example, thought to be on the site of the current S. Maria in Trastevere, has a complicated and unclear history. It has been related to a *titulus Iulii et Callisti*, which from the sources seems to have originally been two separate foundations that were later joined together by the sixth century, or at least given only one presbyter between them. The *titulus Iuli(i)* implies by its name that it was founded by bishop Julius (337-52), and other sources also attribute it to him.[49] One source implies that a *Callistum* already existed at that time near the *titulus*, which the *LP* doubtfully attributes to bishop Callistus (218-22) himself.[50] Archaeology has confirmed the date of the current church of S. Maria in Trastevere to the twelfth century, but a *titulus sancte Marie* is mentioned in 587, but its presbyter is not referred to in the synod list eight years later. The reference to a *basilica Iuli(i)* as *trans Tiberim*, the connection to that of Callistus, and some eighth century references describing a church to the virgin in this region *quae vocatur Calisti*, all link Julius' foundation to that of S. Maria in Trastevere. There is also some archaeological evidence for a fourth century structure on this site.[51]

[49] *LP* I.206, 230; *MGH.AA.* XII.411; *MGH.Epist.* I.367.
[50] *LP* I.9 (Liberian Catalogue), 141. It may not be that outlandish a suggestion however. We know that there was a funerary memorial to Peter outside the walls by about 250, and that the *Transtiberim* area was also outside the walls during most of the third century before Aurelian's construction. The *Callistum* may therefore have simply been a small shrine like Peter's only later embellished to become a *titulus*.
[51] *Coll. Avell.*, 1 passim; *LTUR* III. 119-20, 219-20- *LP.* I.509, II.16, 19, 26.

Either way, the *titulus Iuli(i)* is connected to, or an enlargement of, a centre dedicated to Callistus. A church by this name, San Callisto, still exists, and is less than fifty metres from S. Maria, and both are alongside the line of the ancient *via Aurelia*, the main road into Rome from the west. S. Maria is also at the junction of the modern Via della Lungara/Scala road that passes through the Porta Settimiana, coming into this area from the north. **(Fig.2f)** These are all Renaissance features, but appear to have followed ancient precedents, as the gate seems likely to have been Severan. With the construction of St. Peter's, this road would have become a major pilgrim route from the church into Rome and vice versa.[52] In this way, a church or churches situated at the confluence of two such important roads into the city would have provided visitors and pilgrims with an ideal place to worship and rest. A pilgrim route was thus created, with the *titulus Iulii* and *Callistum* being the markers of its beginning perhaps.

Also along the *via Aurelia* we find S. Crisogoni, or Chrysogoni, a *titulus* first mentioned in 499.[53] Remains of a hall, which was probably attached to a rich *domus* dating to the late third or early fourth century found underneath the current church, may have been the first Christian centre here. Adaptations to it to create an apse and a narthex do not occur until the second half of the fifth century, but that does not rule out its use as a place of Christian worship before this.[54] It is located further east along the road on the same side as S. Maria. They are only about 300 metres apart from each other. In some ways then, one could say they complimented each other, providing two places of worship for Christians coming into the city from the west. Coming or leaving from that direction they would have been difficult to avoid or ignore. They were a sign therefore of the increasing Christianisation of Rome for the human or wheeled traffic along it. This stretch of the road inside the walls could have been regarded as a Christian zone once these foundations were constructed.

The *via Aurelia* itself began at the *pons Aemilius*, a bridge that may have been constructed at the same as the road, that is about the mid-third century BC.[55] The road led into the heart of the ancient city and was a very important and well used thoroughfare as a result. The significance then of the construction of two or three Christian centres alongside it should not be underestimated. From the late fifth or early

[52] *LTUR* III.311-2.
[53] *MGH.AA*. XII.411.
[54] *LTUR* I.266-7; *CBCR* I.144-64 .
[55] Its final destination is also a matter of debate: *LTUR* V.134.

sixth century a basilica to St. Pancras, containing his relics, existed alongside the *via Aurelia* outside the city.[56] From that time therefore, this road would have become even more popular, and these churches would have been at the junction of two pilgrim routes.[57] Indeed, perhaps this was the case before the martyr's basilica was constructed? The catacombs, over which the tomb church to St. Pancras was built, could have been a long-standing popular focus for pilgrimage already, so these Christian foundations built alongside the *via Aurelia* may have been built in acknowledgement of this area being at an even greater focal point for large numbers of pilgrims.

Another early Christian centre in this region, S. Caecilia, was ideally placed alongside the road that led across the Tiber from the nearby *pons Theodosii*, the likely fourth century replacement of the *pons Probi*, a third century construction.[58] Indeed, the reconstruction of the bridge and the building of the church on this site may have been connected, in order to provide a church alongside a newly embellished route through the city.

Titulus Lucinae/S. Laurentii in Lucinae, S. Marcelli and S. Marci along the via Flaminia/Lata

The *via Flaminia*, as we have described, had been used as a showpiece for aristocratic and imperial families since its creation in the third century BC. The builders of the structures placed along it utilised the road's frequent usage to help promote themselves and their family to visitors and Romans alike. It should not be too much of a leap then to suggest the construction of three churches along the road by the mid-fourth century was also intentional for the same reasons. That is, to promote the church's builder, the cult of the martyr to whom the church was dedicated, and Christianity itself. In the same way as the imperial monuments were built here to ensure they were noticed and impressed upon both visitors and locals, these churches were built here with the same motivation in mind. S. Lorenzo in Lucina and S. Marco are both fourth century in origin and will be discussed in reference to other theories behind there respective locations. Both can be associated with nearby pagan structures, but their

[56] *LP* I. 262.
[57] A procession took place between St. Pancras and St. Peter's, in the sixth century at least- *LP* I. 303.
[58] The history of the church will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

existence alongside this important road would have also been a significant, if possibly secondary, benefit of their location.[59]

The church of S. Marcellus was built next to the *via Lata* and is first mentioned in 418, when Boniface I was consecrated pope here. The priests of the church attended the Roman synods of 499 and 595.[60] Remains of a structure which could date from 380-450 have been found under the north wall of the current church on the site, and are thought to belong to the original *titulus*. A fourth or fifth century baptistery has also been found just to the north-east of these remains, which seems to backup this claim. The eighth century structure that replaced it had its apse next to the road, the reverse of the surviving church today, which is sixteenth century.[61] **(Fig.2g)** The question must be asked therefore whether the original late antique church faced away from the *via Lata* like its eighth century successor, or towards it with its entrance next to the road like today. In other words, did the first church builders want to associate the church with the road because of the human traffic along it, or avoid it because of the noise and disruption it could cause to services? The answer is we won't know until further excavations are carried out that confirm where the fourth/fifth century apse is located, if any remains exist. If the entrance to the church was away from the main road it would mirror the fourth-century S. Marco, two hundred and fifty metres to the south, whose apse lay next to the *Vicus Pallacinae*.[62] Perhaps this is a pattern, that is churches lying alongside and next to main roads into the city but not directly connected to them, possibly because of the noise. That is, they were easily, but not directly, accessible from the main road. This applies to all the examples we have looked at and will look at. This may have meant that when they were initially built they were not particularly visible from the road, but the relatively few Christian centres in Rome and elsewhere up to the fifth century would suggest that Christian travellers would have known of their existence anyway.

The Christian nature of the *via Lata* is further emphasised by the existence of a fourth or fifth century *diaconia* opposite S. Marcellus, on the other side of the road. The two indeed may have been originally connected in some way. Again, we cannot say

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[59] See Chapter 3, pp.100-3, 116-8. A history and discussion of these churches can also be found here.
[60] *Coll. Avell.*, 14; *MGH.AA.* XII.413; *MGH.Ep.* I.367.
[61] *LTUR* III. 211-2; *CBCR* II. 211-4; *LP* I. 509. The name of the church and its proximity to the *Catubulum* (the stables for the public post) gave rise to a fanciful story surrounding its foundation by the sixth century- *LP* I. 164; *AA.SS. Ian.* II. 9, 11-12.
[62] This pattern is noted in *LTUR* V.140, with other later examples.

where the entrance to this building lay, but the apse of the chapel within it again lies along the main road. The church of S. Maria in Via Lata was built on top of it in the eleventh century.[63] **(Fig.2h)** Also, we hear of a basilica built by bishop Julius (337-52) next to a forum, confirmed as the forum of Trajan in the Liberian Catalogue.[64] The church has since disappeared, in name at least, so it is variously thought to be represented by the current S. Marcellus, SS. Apostoli further east, or a now lost structure near the wall of Trajan's forum.[65] With the first or last possibilities there is a connection to the *Lata*. It would be fair to say then, that by the early fifth century, the *via Lata* could be described as a Christian road, and once more a definite sign to visitors from the north, and those generally using the road otherwise, that Rome was now a Christian city. The frequent use and activity of the road would help spread this message, as well as providing the Christian centres along it with notoriety and worshippers. Pilgrims going to the Basilica or Christian cemetery of Valentine, on the *via Flaminia*, from the city would have been well provided for.[66]

Titulus Fasciolae & Basilica Crescentiana or Titulus Sancti Xysti along the Via Appia

These two churches provide us with another strong case for arguing for a strategy by some Christian builders in the fourth and fifth century to build Christian centres where human traffic was greatest. Both are late fourth or early fifth century, and lay a matter of yards from each other, something in itself which implies a desirable location. These two centres, apart from being located next to the ancient *via Appia*, were also situated in front of the entrance to the Baths of Caracalla, thus their placement is interesting in two ways. **(Fig.2i)** The significance of the latter will be discussed in a later chapter, so for now we will concentrate on the two churches relationship with the *via Appia* and the importance of this.

The *via Appia* itself was began in 312BC by the censor Appius Claudius Caecus, and linked Rome with its Latin colonies in the south-east corner of Italy.[67] It began at the *porta Capena* by the Circus Maximus. From Republican times the first part of the

[63] *LTUR* V.140; *CBCR* III.72-81; *LTUR* III.221-3. For the idea that the first church here was fifth or sixth century see *LTUR* III.220-1.
[64] *LP* I. 205; *LP* I.8.
[65] *LTUR* I.180-1, IV. 85-6.
[66] *LP* I. 8, 205. Whether Valentine was a martyr or the owner of the land on which the basilica was built, is unknown.
[67] Livy 9.29.5-6; Diod. Sic. 20.36.1-2; *CIL* XI.1827.

road was used as a showpiece for familial and later imperial propaganda, with tombs and arches being common features. The fact that the *Appia* was the route by which returning armies or foreign delegations entered the city from the south-east explains this, as well as its frequent use by the general public.[68] Severus' *Septizodium* was placed just inside the *porta Capena* so as to be visible by all who took this road into Rome.[69] Many religious buildings were also built along it, often in association with the many tombs and burials that characterised the initial stretch of the road. These temples no doubt benefited from the road's frequent use. By the imperial period this first part of the road became more built up with burials decreasing. With the construction of the Aurelianic wall this practice ceased completely.[70] There seems to have been a proliferation of bath buildings along the road as well, dominated by those of Caracalla of course from the third century, but also smaller *balnea* and the larger complexes built by Severus and Commodus.[71] These baths assumed appearance along the road, the majority probably by the *porta Capena* itself, suggests their placement was to take advantage of the consistent flow of people here and the easy access to water supplies from the springs and aqueducts in the area.

As such, all the builders of the major structures along the *Appia* were, in one way or another, utilizing the road and its common usage by the people of Rome, as well as visitors from the south and returning armies, for their own advantage. That is to for their monuments to be noticed and/or used. It is in this context that we need to appreciate the construction of the two Christian centres in the late fourth and early fifth century on this same stretch of the *Appia.*

The first of these, the *titulus Fasciolae*, is mentioned initially in an inscription dated to 377, and is thought to have lain near, but not on the site of, the existing church of SS. Nereo ed Achilleo. Archaeological evidence suggests it was to the north or north-west of the current church. Its title seems to refer to a *fasciola* or small bandage. This was associated with a fifth or sixth century legend that said the bandage covering the wounds of St. Peter, on his escape from the city along the *via Appia*, fell on the spot

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[68] The existence of the *area Carruces*, the place where travellers left their carriages, and the *area Radicaria*, a vegetable market and/or customs post, in the area attests to the road's frequent use by the public. The existence of the *Mutatorium Caesaris*, where emperors changed from military to civilian clothes after returning from campaign, opposite the Caracallan baths, confirms its common use as a military route: *Not./Cur.* I, XII – Nordh, p.73.14, 16, p.92.10

[69] *SHA.* Severus. 24.3.

[70] *LTUR* V.130-3.

[71] *Not./Cur.* I. – Nordh, pp.73-4. The precise locations of the *balnea* and the Severan and Commodian baths are unknown.

where the church lay. This story is, however, an invention, more than likely to increase the popularity of a church on a major visitor/pilgrim route into the city.[72] Such a relic's survival is also fairly unlikely, and Fasciola could simply be the name of the owner of the land on which the church was built. The *titulus* seems to have acquired its new name between 499 and 595, the period between the two Roman synods where the first name disappears and the latter takes its place in the lists of priests present.[73] The church was built between the *via Appia* and the new road built by Caracalla in front of his baths that lead up to the entrance of the Circus Maximus, the *via Nova*.[74] The *titulus* has been argued to be associated with a *Xenodochium* on the *via Nova*, which Gregory the Great mentions in a letter of May 591, a not unsurprising location for such a institution considering its favourable position near two such busy roads. The *titulus* appears to have become a *diaconia* in the seventh century, only to be eventually abandoned by Leo III (795-816), it being replaced by the structure that largely survives today.[75]

The *Basilica Crescentiana* was founded under Anastasius I (399-401) and had representatives at the Roman synod of 499.[76] There is some debate as to its location, as the *LP* mentions that it was in Region II on the *via Mamurtini*. It is unclear whether Region II refers to an ecclesiastical region or an Augustan one, and the location of the *via Mamurtini* is also uncertain. The *titulus* has been argued to have been on the Quirinal, on the basis of a *vicus Mamuri* or *Mamurtini* existing there near to S. Susanna.[77] It is more likely, however, to be on or very near to the site of S. Sisto Vecchio in the *via Appia/Nova* area, as there is a *balneum* or *templum Mamurtini/Mamuri* between the *via Appia* and *Latina*, and this is also in the second ecclesiastical region. The bath or temple is thought to have been named after the road on which it lay. Other theories also put the road cited in the *LP* in this area and thus the church as well.[78] The church of S. Sixtus first appears in 595, where a presbyter of the

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[72] *AA.SS.*Julii I.304. See Chapter 5, n.71.

[73] Inscription of 377: *ICUR* I.124 n. 262; Archaeology: *CBCR* III. 147-8; Piétri, *RC*. I. 466-7; Under Leo III (795-816) the church is in ruins due to age and flooding, and is replaced by a new structure positioned nearby, but on higher ground, or on a podium, away from the marshy flood-prone soil in the area- *LP* II.33; Synod of 499, three priests of *tituli Fasciolae- MGH.AA* XII. 413, 414. Synod of 595, one priest of the *Titulus SS. Nerei e Achillei.-MGH. Ep.* I. 367.

[74] *SHA*. Caracalla 9.9; Aur. Victor. *Caes*. 21.4- *LTUR* V.142.

[75] Gregory, *Ep.* I.44; *LTUR* II.241-2. For the various theories on the location of the *xenodochium* see *LTUR* V.217-8.

[76] *LP* I. 218; *MGH.AA*. XII. 412, 414.

[77] *AA.SS*.. Aug II. 632.

[78] The *balneum mamurtini*: *Not./Cur.* I. – Nordh, p.73.15; *LP* I.221 for a *templum mamuri* and a *clivus mamuri*, perhaps a reference to the baths; *LTUR* V. 177-8; Geertman H., 'Titulus Sancti Sixti' in de Blaauw S., (ed.), *Hic Fecit Basilicam*, pp.127-32.

church attended the Roman synod of that year. The name may be as a result of a reconstruction, or a new foundation, by Sixtus III in the mid-fifth century, or a dedication to the martyred bishop Sixtus II. Investigations have indeed found remains of a fifth century Christian basilica on the site that lies alongside and parallel to the *Appia*.[79] **(Fig.2j)**

Even if S. Sixtus is a new construction though, unconnected to the Basilica Crescentiana, perhaps to complement and eventually replace the damaged titulus Fasciolae across the road, it still shows the importance the Christian authorities gave to endeavouring to ensure that a Christian church was situated on the via Appia. The provision of two such centres emphasises this further of course. Whatever the situation, the existence of two churches, certainly the case at some point in the fifth century, either side of this main artery into Rome, is obviously significant and intentional in providing the visitor from the south with a place of worship, and to signpost the fact that Rome was now Christian. The many catacombs and Christian cemeteries alongside the via Appia beyond the city walls, meant this road was an increasingly popular pilgrim route. In this way, these churches can be argued to have been built to provide the pilgrim with a convenient place to worship and rest on their way to, or on their way back from, praying at the relics of the martyrs. This purpose may also explain their location opposite the Caracallan baths, an ideal place to rest, and the reason why a *xenodochium* was built here by the sixth century. The two churches and their donors would, of course, have also benefited from the notoriety and extra numbers of worshippers and pilgrims that their location by this road would have provided.

From the mid-fifth century, we begin to see a new building strategy by the Christian authorities. We start to see Christian churches appearing on hills, challenging the visual dominance of the pagan temples. The following are the first two examples of this, which were built within our timeframe, that is, up to the death of Sixtus III in 440.

Basilica Sanctae Mariae on the Cispian Hill

The site and the size of this foundation is, I believe, a watershed in the Christianisation of the city of Rome, at least for its contemporary inhabitants. It was constructed by Sixtus III (432-440) on the summit of the Cispian hill, a spur of the

[79] *CBCR* IV. 157-70; *LTUR* IV. 330.

Esquiline, and became a major Christian centre within the city, only equalled in size within the walls by the Lateran basilica. **(Fig.2k)** In the *LP* it is associated with the Liberian basilica, and it is implied that it replaced that structure.[80] The archaeological evidence goes against this however, with no Christian remains before the early to mid-fifth century surviving on the site. In fact, below the church was found a Roman structure of mid to late imperial date which contained remains of a fresco of an illustrated calendar, and is variously argued to be the *macellum liviae*, described as next to both the Liberian basilica and Sixtus' construction, or a house. It is now widely believed though that Liberius' foundation lies elsewhere in the area, perhaps represented by the existing S. Vito or S. Bibiana. The location of the Markets of Livia is also uncertain.[81]

Because of its date *Sancta Maria*, the modern S.Maria Maggiore, corresponds to the end of our period of study and is, in my view, the culmination of many of the Christian building projects that preceded it. That is, a church that was overtly large and prominently placed in the city, as opposed to the more subtle and modestly situated foundations that we have already discussed in this chapter. For a bishop to build such a large basilica on the top of a hill, as indeed he seems to have been the donor as well as the initiator of the project,[82] is an enormous statement of intent and a sign of growing Christian confidence. Such a move also seems in line with Sixtus as an individual, someone who embellished, enlarged or founded many churches. It almost goes without saying that this church was certainly the most visible within the city at that time, and its location does not appear coincidental as a result. It is clear from Sixtus' other projects that he wanted to make a material impact on the city, and to be a second Damasus in that sense. This was no doubt motivated by personal ambition and a quest for prestige, but also to show to others, and to the inhabitants of Rome, that their city was no longer a pagan stronghold but was now a fully fledged Christian capital.

It was not just the hill and the basilica's height that made it the first real Christian landmark within the city; it was also its position in relation to major roads that ensured it was a prominent mental signpost for the population of the city and its visitors. This area is at the intersection of three, or possibly four, main roads at the *Forum*

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[80] *LP* I.232.
[81] *LTUR* I. 181, II. 68-9, III. 217; *CBCR* III. 13-14, 53-7; Magi F., *Il calendario dipinto sotto Santa Maria Maggiore*, (1972).
[82] See Chapter 1, n.72.

Esquilinum, just to the south-east of the church. Knowledge of this part of the city is not helped by the existence here of the modern Termini station, but a general picture of the ancient roads in the area can be discerned. These roads were the *via Salaria nova* from the north, the *via Labicana* from the south-east and the *via Tiburtina* from the north-east, the latter two merging, with the *via Praenestina* perhaps, and becoming the *clivus Suburanus*. This in turn became the *Argiletum*, which led into the *Forum Romanum*. The *Forum Esquilinum* was, as a result, a hub for human and wheeled traffic into the city. The *vicus Patricius*, a major internal road, also ran just to the west of the church. **(see Fig.1a)** As such, the basilica seems to have been oriented for maximum visibility from major thoroughfares, and from other hills and regions in the city. Most people coming into the city from the north or east would have found themselves by the church, and all would have seen it. The statement was clear to them; Rome was now a Christian city. The earlier and later appearance of other churches in this immediate area, show that this region was a prime location for all these reasons.[83]

Sancta Sabina on the Aventine Hill

Although this church is not on the summit of the hill – this area was occupied in all probability by the temples of Diana and Minerva as we have discussed – it is at its western edge, on a ridge dominating the view from the Tiber. This part of the hill drops very sharply down to the river, so any view of the church would have been unencumbered to those coming up the river in either direction, and to those in the *Transtiberim* region of the city. As a result, this church would have provided another sign of the Christianisation of the city to those parts of the city, and especially to sea trade to Rome from the south. **(Fig.2l)** A similarity with the Temple of Castor and Pollux at Ostia may be apparent here, both examples being the first religious landmark from a particular direction coming into the port, and as such providing a mental representation of that place to the viewer.[84] No expense was spared on this church either, the columns for example were specially commissioned or bought from the same

[83] These are S. Pudenziana, S. Andrea Cata-Barbara, S. Prassede & S. Martino ai Monti (*Tit. Sylvestri/Equitii/* SS. Silvestri et Martino).
[84] Amm. Marc. 19.10.4 shows the continuing importance and existence of this temple in late antiquity.

building, and rich furnishings were provided.[85] This further emphasises the deliberate attempt to make this an impressive and imposing structure both inside and out.

The church was begun by a priest or bishop named Peter of Illyria during the pontificate of Celestine I (422-32), but not completed or dedicated it seems until that of Sixtus III (432-40).[86] The church was bounded by the *vicus altus* and *vicus Armilustri*, now the Via di Sancta Sabina, on its eastern and western sides, which determined its orientation. The *vicus Armilustri* also led to the *Porta Ostiensis*. From the list of presbyters for the synod of 499, which separates two representatives of a *titulus sabinae* and one for a *titulus sanctae sabinae*, it may indicate a confusion about the origin of its name – whether a saint or a lay donor of the same name – or two separate foundations with only our example surviving. This is resolved by the sixth century synod in 595, when only the latter name appears.[87]

There have been numerous remains found, within and under the church, of earlier buildings, all of which were standing in the fourth century. This implies that these structures, of which the majority seem to have been residential, were destroyed partly or totally to make way for the church's construction. The church both uses and overlies the walls of these buildings. **(Fig.2m)** The suggestion that one of these earlier structures, the so-called *dromos* building, was the original *titulus* cannot be proven and is more likely to have been a rich *domus*.[88] The church being deliberately built on this spot for its dominating and highly visible nature is equally or more likely.

2.4. Conclusion

From the examples we have described above, we can see how the maxims of visibility and accessibility were important for ancient builders of both pagan and Christian structures. For pagan founders of new temples it was important for their own prestige that their commissions were visible and popular elements of the urban landscape. The pattern of temples on hills, and so visually dominating the city below, cannot just be coincidence. For Christian builders, whose motivation was also based on

[85] Brandenburg H., *Ancient Churches of Rome from the Fourth to the Eighth Century*, p.169.
[86] *ILCV* 1778a -a large mosaic inscription in the church that describes its founder and date; *LP* I.235.
[87] *MGH.AA* XII. 411, 412, 414; *MGH. Epist.* I.367.
[88] *CBCR* IV.78-98; *LTUR* IV. 221-2.

prestige as well as piety, the priorities were the same. It should not be controversial then to suggest that such donors wanted their investments to be equally popular and/or visible. The bishop of Rome, who, we have argued, was greatly involved at some level in all Christian building projects in the city, would have been particularly anxious for this to be the case. For him, for Rome to be seen and perceived as increasingly Christian would be a sign of his own success as well as Christianity's. His prestige, and that of his see, would also of course increase commensurately with this. Part of this process was for Rome to become a centre for pilgrimage, and many early churches show a tendency to be built alongside the roads that led to the extra-mural basilicas, cemeteries and catacombs that provided the relics that drew pilgrims to Rome.

As a result, for the early fifth century visitor to Rome, the roads that came into the city were visibly Christian, but the rest of the city still seemed pagan, the temples still dominating the skyline with no Christian rivals. The modest nature of most early churches meant they were not widely visible, so for them to be located on a busy road or pilgrim route would have been crucial to enter the collective consciousness of the city's population, and to encourage worshippers to use them. Other examples of this would be *Sancta Pudentiana* and *Sancta Susanna* being constructed on the important internal roads of the *vicus Patricius* and the *alta Semita* respectively. By the mid-fifth century we begin to see Christian builders confident enough to challenge the visual superiority of the temples, with a few large examples being built on hills.[89] It was thus in these ways, making Rome visibly Christian and through the creation of pilgrim routes, that the ecclesiastical authorities sought to Christianise the city, one of the main aims of the Roman Church in this period.

[89] The other main example of this was *Sanctus Stephanus* being built on the Caelian hill, but under Simplicius (468-83) so out of our time period- *LP* I.249; *CBCR* IV.199-240; *LTUR* IV. 373-5.

3. *Churches and Temples*: Christian and Pagan Space

For this part of my study of the late antique topography of Rome I wish to look at the occasional relationship there was between the early Christian churches and significant pagan areas. I believe that in some cases there is a compelling argument to be made for an intentional purpose behind the placement of a church vis à vis a place of pagan worship. Much has been said about the lack of churches in the pagan centre of the city, implying that the church builders somehow wanted to avoid such places. This completely fails to recognise the reality of the ancient city. That is, as we have said above, pagan 'space' was not confined to the walls of the many temple or shrine precincts in the centre, but existed throughout the city in the form of temples, small shrines at crossroads and elsewhere, as well as the altars and statues of the gods in houses and public places.[1] That is, in the case of Rome, the whole city was intrinsically pagan not just the centre, and as such Christian builders could not avoid pagan spaces even if they wanted to. The purpose of this chapter then is not simply to note the proximity of churches to pagan areas, as this was unavoidable, but rather to focus on those cases where an intended relationship seems convincing or appears to have a wider significance.

An equally interesting study would have been to look at the location of the various Jewish synagogues in the city as well, and to see if there were any interesting topographical relationships with pagan or Christian centres. Unfortunately, evidence for the specific sites of synagogues in Rome is entirely lacking.[2] We do however have the pagan epitaph of a Publius Corfidius Signinus, a fruit seller *de agger a proseucha*, the area where he lived or had his stall.[3] In other words, the synagogue provided a landmark for a whole district of the city. It is likely then that other examples could have also been quite large or prominent features of the landscape of ancient Rome, but without more

[1] Plautus, *Aulularia*. IV.1.20; Tert, *De Spect.* 8.
[2] Eleven synagogues (meaning 'congregation', similar to the Christian 'church', but presumably also referring to the building that held them) are mentioned in literary and epigraphic sources for Rome, but all are only named after the broad region of the city they represent (for example the Campus Martius or Subura), or certain people (like Augustus or Agrippa), or the origin of the congregation that worshipped there (Hebrews or Tripolitans).– Schürer E., *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (trans. Burkill T.A. et al.), III.1. 96-8 with refs. No archaeological remains have been found.
[3] *CIL* VI. 9821.

information as to their precise location we cannot say any more. We have to concentrate instead on Christian and pagan sites.

Only a few words need to be said about definitions of Christian and pagan space because of the broader discussion in the previous chapter. Such 'space' itself can be defined as a place of worship or religious activity. The two religions, if one can put all the various cults of 'paganism' under the single term of 'religion', had radically different experiences of sacred space though. This was as a result of their beliefs and their history. Paganism was essentially a worship of the world around oneself and a placation of, and relationship with, the forces that governed it. As such, the appeasement and honouring of the gods themselves, namely sacrifice, was done outside in full view of everybody directly or indirectly taking part. Further, processions associated with a festival made the streets in question part of that festival. The inside of the temple or shrine merely housed the god/goddess, usually in the form of a statue, as well as sacred objects associated with the deity, and access was limited to priests. So, pagan 'space' was essentially outside and rather fluid, a small shrine or altar could be placed anywhere. Christian 'space' on the other hand can be defined rather differently. Christianity also preached an omnipresent God, but from its very beginnings was occasionally persecuted but always mistrusted and disliked by the majority pagan population. As a result, Christian worship could not be performed outdoors but had to be done secretly, or at least away from public view. This meant in an enclosed space, and often at night. Further, Christianity railed against the pagan world that it emerged in and so an internal private form of worship suited Christians also, the walls separating them from the corruption and evil outside. This way of worship, if not the attitude to the world, survived into the fourth century with the imperial acceptance and eventual support for the religion. With the increasing numbers of Christians also by this time, a more public and formal type of Christian centre was required. The temple and altar model was rejected in favour of the basilica where four walls separated Christian ceremony from everyday life. This fitted rather well the official strain that still spoke out against that world, but contradicted the traditional Christian line that said the Christian God was omnipresent and could not be confined by walls, as discussed above. In any case it allowed for a more focused worship that was sufficiently different from pagan practice. As we have said in the previous chapter, a change in Christian thinking about space and the city took place from the fourth century, which is reflected in the

location of many of the churches in Rome of that period and into the fifth century and the later appearance of processional activity.

From what we have said then, we can argue that initially Christian space was internal, enclosed and limited, and pagan space was external and unlimited. The former therefore had an advantage as Christianity could impose itself on a pagan area, whereas paganism was always on the other side of the church wall. The story of the fourth and fifth century then is essentially one of new Christian churches intruding on a pre-existing pagan landscape. It is the examples where the juxtaposition between the two could be significant that we will focus on here.[4]

The sources for this are both archaeological and literary, but are also rather one-sided. With the written evidence we get the Christian view coming through very clearly about temples, but we have few non-Christian authors surviving who discuss churches or their opinion of them appearing. It is hard to believe this was not a topic of discussion in 'pagan' circles, especially amongst the educated classes who would have written the sources, so we can only assume that this paucity of material was due to their poor survival or a deliberate reluctance to discuss such matters. It should also be noted that we have no written proof of Christian thinking in relation to church building and any intended relationship with pagan centres. Any argument here is based on the archaeological evidence for the positioning of each religious structure, much of which on its own suggests a spatial interaction, whether intended or not. Our knowledge of Christian and pagan theological thinking can also strongly imply a relationship between a pagan and Christian structure.

We certainly know there was conflict between the two creeds, and with Judaism it seems, that focused on the religious buildings themselves, of which there is strong evidence for the Eastern empire but precious little for the West.[5] The reason for this is not altogether clear but for Rome itself we have only one example of a Christian attacking a pagan site or sites, but no cases of pagans attacking a church. Whether such things never or rarely occurred in Rome in the fourth and fifth centuries or were ignored or overlooked by the sources we have is a moot point. It seems likely though that an

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[4] Public Christian processions in Rome, in other words the beginnings of the externalisation of Christian space, are not known until the late sixth century, when they became an extension of the already existing stational liturgy. In this way, these processions were more about the ritualisation of the movement from one Christian space or church to the other; they were not a form of worship in themselves, although they took on an increasingly penitential character from the sixth century (Baldovin J.F., *The Urban Character of Christian Worship*, pp. 158-64).

[5] Ambrose, *Ep.* 40; Socrates, *HE.*V.16; Sozomen, *HE.*VII.15.

unofficial consensus was agreed between the two parties that appears to have achieved an uneasy peace. In order to serve as a background and context then for our discussion it would be wise to look briefly at the, albeit sparse, evidence for pagan views on Christian churches and the more voluminous evidence for Christian opinion of pagan centres. We need to be aware while doing this of the differences between the East and West as regards the temples and churches, as the extremism we see in the East does not seem to be mirrored in the Latin West. I am using the term 'pagan views' here in this chapter, something I avoid in following chapters, because I will be looking at writers who clearly do have a belief in the gods and their power. Equally, it is the reaction of people with those beliefs to the emerging Church, and the buildings it built that interest me here.

3.1 Christian Views of Temples

The Christian perception of the temple was surprisingly varied, with a divide between the official clerical view and that of the Emperor and most Christians on the ground. This mixed picture reflects the difficult balancing act that took place between the Church and the civic authorities, one motivated by scripture and a religious zeal, the other having to consider practical and aesthetic considerations such as provision for games and a general public appreciation of beautiful buildings.

The general themes in Christian writers' discussion of temple buildings are that they housed demons – the belief being that the gods were in fact malevolent spirits – and, from the fourth century that they were now empty and ignored.[6] Furthermore, there was the conviction that the altars outside those temples or elsewhere were 'polluting', 'dirty' and 'profane' because of the sacrifices or dangerous augury that took place on them.[7] Particular ire was focused on the cult of Mithras; its similarity to many of the tenets of Christianity meant it was a direct competitor. This manifested itself as attacks on Mithraea at times, which we have archaeological and literary evidence for in Rome.[8]

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[6] Justin Martyr, *Apol.*, I.62; Tertullian, *De Spect.* 12-13; Lact., *Inst. Div.* I. 11; Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis*, 43; Augustine, *Ep.* 102.18-19, *Confessions*, VIII.2.4; Jerome, *Ep.* 107.1.

[7] Sozomen, *HE*, II.3; Ambrose, *Ep.* 17.9; Chrysostom, *In.Eph. Hom* XVIII.passim.

[8] Christian writers against Mithraism and the two religions' similarities - Justin Martyr, *Apol.*, I. 66, *Dial. Try.*70, 78; Tertullian, *De Corona*, 15, *Adv. Marc.* I.13, *De Praes. Haer.* 40, *De Bapt.* 5; Socrates, *HE*.III.2; smashing up, destruction and deliberate filling up with rubble of Mithraea in Rome has been recorded – see below 'Churches and Mithraea' with Jerome, *Ep.* 107.2.

In the East attacks by Christians on other pagan places occurred, interestingly mainly at sites dedicated to other 'oriental' cults, rather than those of the traditional Graeco-Roman deities. This was not mirrored widely in the West and certainly not in Rome.[9] The attacks on Mithraea in Rome though appear to have been systematic and officially sanctioned, but the general lack of violence towards other pagan centres was probably due to the aura of fear that surrounded them, and the fact that they represented Rome's imperial greatness and strength. However, some Roman bishops of this period had no qualms about building, or allowing to be built, several churches very near major pagan sites. We will discuss through our examples of this phenomenon, whether this was an attempt at aggressive confrontation or something subtler.

Imperial opinion of temples was more pragmatic in general, but somewhat confused. Constantine seems to have had no issue with temples or the activities therein.[10] Constantius and Constans, although Arian Christians, saw temples for their aesthetic, practical and historical value, albeit at the same time disagreeing with the activities that took place inside and outside them.[11] Valentinian II saw it as his duty to restore the public funding of the temples, but seems to have been persuaded against it.[12] Theodosius again, like Constantius and Constans before him, appreciated the temples for their practical importance in the running of a town or city. However his attitude changed by the early 390s with him ruling against going near them, or even looking at them it seems.[13] A rather confused picture emerges then, of emperors who were against sacrifices and 'magical' activity, but were willing for the temple buildings themselves to survive, yet at the same time decreasing their funds and legislating against even approaching such buildings, as well as closing them down. It seems that the balance the emperors were trying to address between religious and practical considerations was

[9] The exception being the actions said to have been taken by Martin of Tours in the Gallic countryside - Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini*, 13-5.
[10] *Cod. Theod.* IX.16.2, XVI.10.1.
[11] *Cod. Theod.* XVI.10.3 (Nov. 342/6?); Symm., *Rel.* 3.8 (357), but also *Cod. Theod.* XVI.10.6 (Feb. 356). Both Constans and Constantius ordered the closure of all temples though soon after -*Cod. Theod.* XVI.10.4 (Dec. 346/354/356?). However, this law is more likely to have been issued in 356 when Constans was dead and when Constantius was sole emperor with Julian as Caesar – *PLRE* I. Flavius Taurus 3. Thus, the apparent contradiction here with XVI.10.3 could be explained by the death of the more moderate Constans (which may also explain XVI.10.6 which was issued by Constantius and Julian). Equally, clerical pressure could have been a factor in this change of heart. There was clearly an early desire to differentiate between the pagan rites that surrounded temples and the long-held entertainment traditions associated with them. The later laws demanding the closure of all temples imply such a separation was not possible.
[12] Ambrose, *Ep.* 17.3. His father Valentinian I also seems to have supported the temples- *Cod. Theod.* IX.16.9 (May 371).
[13] *Cod. Theod.* XVI.10.8 (Nov. 382), XVI.10.10 (Feb. 391).

upset by the stubborn persistence of pagan belief and the rhetoric and influence of the Church.

For the ordinary Christian on the street we know nothing certain about their opinion of temples, but it is likely a mixed view of them prevailed by late antiquity. Perhaps those who were converted pagans knew there was nothing to fear from the buildings or altars, with those born and raised Christian being more wary.

3.2 Pagan Views of Churches

Of the few sources we have that show a writer of pagan belief discussing churches, only one is critical, and this describes the situation during the Diocletianic persecution in the East, and is told to us through the Christian writer Lactantius. He describes the story of the fate of a church in Nicomedia. It is described as being on a hill by the imperial palace, significant in itself, but the priority for the imperial authorities is the contents of the church, the scriptures and holy images, rather than the building itself. The decision to destroy it seems to have been settled on because of its visibility and prominence more than anything else.[14] For later pagans, even with Christianity's imperial acceptance, the focus for their anger still lay on the activities within the church, but as with Diocletian and Galerius, the church building itself was the symbol of what they mistrusted or despised and a sign of Christian success.

The pagan historian Zosimus is fairly neutral about *ekklesia* within his writings, regarding them mainly as places of refuge and only once as a place of prayer. He is not critical of their presence in the cities or them as an institution. However, he describes Jerusalem as once a home of the Jews, but a city now adorned with Christian buildings, so clearly equating the rise in the number of churches with a Christianisation of the city's population.[15] Ammianus Marcellinus, whose 'secret monotheism' has been convincingly argued against[16], in his occasional references to Christians mentions

[14] Lact. *De Mort. Pers.* 12. Other destruction of churches by pagans during and after the persecutions- Lact. *De Mort. Pers.* 15; Ambrose, *Ep.* 17.4.

[15] Zosimus, IV.40.5, V.8.1-2, 18.1, 34.3, 45.4 (church as refuge); V.23 (place of prayer); V.8.2 (Jerusalem).

[16] Davies J., *Rome's Religious History*, pp.265-8 & refs. He argues for a definitively pagan Ammianus, whose neutrality, terminology and even-handedness towards the gods and the Christian God was a result of his scruples as an historian rather than as a signal as to his religious persuasion. In fact the gods are mentioned more frequently, and with more influence on human affairs, than in either Livy or Tacitus.

churches three times, but purely for the purposes of his narrative and does not give an opinion of them. He certainly knows their purpose, but as a pagan is sanguine about their appearance in cities, and sees them as simply a place of assembly and worship for a certain religious sect. He refers to a church in Rome in 367 as the *basilica Sicinini ubi ritus Christiani est conventiculum*, in other words by its purpose as a place of Christian assembly and its location in the city, the *Sicininum* being a late place designation for, it is thought, an area around the Cispian hill.[17] The pagan court poet Claudian, writing at the turn of the fifth century, is strangely reticent about churches, which may be a sign of his own religious predilections and his antiquarian style. Pagan temples are lovingly described and are part of his conjuring of the image of a great and ancient Rome, where the inclusion of the very recent Christian churches on the landscape do not fit.[18] Because of this Claudian may have disliked the churches, as they were an obvious visual reminder of the move away from the classical pagan past that for him defined Rome's greatness. It is likely many pagans, especially those of aristocratic or educated lineage who thought like him, would have felt the same way. They may also have not been able to say anything publicly like Claudian, both being dependent on Christian emperors for their position in society.

So if any thread runs through educated non-Christian thought that we can see it is that a church was disliked because of what it represented, and was probably a sign of Rome's decline for this group. With the increasingly pro-Christian atmosphere of the fourth century however, nothing could be said openly that criticised Christianity by any of the elites who still valued their political career. Strangely in Rome we hear of no great offensive against the churches during Julian's reign. The fact that the two prominent churches of the city, St. Peter's and the Lateran were imperial projects probably had something to do with this. The extensive Christian building programme initiated by Damasus from 366 may indicate, however, that some damage was done to the smaller *tituli* and extra-mural shrines. Nothing can be proven though, and it is equally likely that a general animosity by the pagan elite never spilled over into violence towards churches in the city. The incidents of this in the East seem to have been started due to provocation by Christians, so the calm situation in Rome was

[17] Amm Marc. XXVII.3.13. If this area is around the Cispian then the Liberian Basilica or the *Titulus Equitii* may be meant, the only two Christian centres certainly in the vicinity at the time-see also *CIL* VI. 37111 & *LP* I. 171, 233. Other refs. to churches in Ammianus - XXVIII.6.27, XV.5.31.

[18] Eg. *De Sexto Consulatu Honorii Augusti*, 35-52. This goes along with his frequent use of pagan imagery.

probably more a result of the Christian reluctance to interfere with the temples and shrines there. The potency and symbolism that emanated from these pagan centres, which we see in Claudian, was the likely reason for this. Notwithstanding, it seems very probable that the priests and some worshippers at a temple or shrine would not have appreciated the appearance of a church nearby. It is to the reasoning behind some compelling examples of such a situation that we will now turn.

With the examples we will discuss for Rome, it appears that we do not simply have a conflict model as such between all the churches and the pagan centres. Rather, we have a more complicated picture that involves the new church vying for popular attention, attempting to assimilate with a centre of pagan worship, as well as two or three Christian foundations which do suggest a degree of conflict with a pagan neighbour. With all these case-studies we need to be conscious of not just the reasoning behind the church's placement, either near or on top of a pagan site, but also whether such a reason could be, or was meant to be picked up by the people visiting the church, or whether this was just a private statement by the Church authorities? Whatever the case, such an act would only have had a relatively short-term potency if the pagan centre in question was dismantled or destroyed. A more subtle message, beyond the church's victory over paganism, would have been lost over time once the identity of any nearby pagan monument was forgotten. What we may be seeing however, in four of our examples at least, is an attempt at inculturation between popular and potent pagan cults and Christianity, in order to challenge and disarm the former. An interesting observation is the strong relationship many churches in Rome have to places of Sun worship and the cult of Sol-Mithras. This strategy was probably as a consequence of Constantine's and his contemporaries' likely ambiguous concept of Christianity, and their cultural appreciation of the divine as a henotheistic idea. Also, rather than trying to simply destroy popular pagan cults through words, actions and legal avenues, the later Christian authorities sought to integrate many of the concepts and imagery of each cult into Christianity. This would allow most of the population to be able to more easily transfer their pagan beliefs into a Christian framework they could now understand. The locations of the various churches which I will discuss below, do, I believe, show evidence for such a policy, as well as a more confrontational approach towards Mithraism in the city.

This study, as elsewhere, is from the Christian viewpoint, with new Christian buildings in Rome intruding on pagan space and not vice versa. However, where possible, some comments on likely pagan reactions to such interventions will be considered.

3.3 Case-Studies

3.3.1 Churches and the cult of Sol

Titulus Lucinae/S. Laurentii in Lucina

Our first example is very intriguing. The current church lies alongside the Via del Corso, formerly the *via Lata*, the intra-mural stretch of the *via Flaminia*. This road ran through the northern Campus Martius, an area of imperial *ustrina* and mausolea in antiquity. Under the existing church has been found a second century structure, a third century *insula* and the fifth or fourth century remains of a church. A Christian centre of some sort seems to have existed in the vicinity before the election of Damasus *in lucinis* in 366.[19] Much of the study of the church has viewed the building in isolation and not touched on its late antique topographical context beyond the remains immediately below and around it. When we take these things into account the use of the term *in lucinis* takes on some significance.

The area where the church lies used to be the *Horologium Augusti* in antiquity, which had an Egyptian obelisk at its southern edge acting as a *gnomon*, with the *Ara Pacis* just to the east. The *via Lata* ran north-west/south-east to the east of this complex. We know that the ground level around the *Horologium* was raised under Hadrian (117-138), with the *Ara Pacis* being preserved in a specially built recess. An arch over the *via Lata* was also built at this time very near to the altar.[20] Whether this means the sundial was now buried we do not know, but a second century building with a mosaic floor and

[19] *Coll. Avell.*, 1.5; *LP* I.234; *CBCR* II.182-3; *LTUR* III.183-5; *MGH.AA.* XII. 410; Gregory. *Ep.* II.2. The fourth century layers found just below the 'fifth century church' makes it possible that the church is of that period instead. It may well be Damasian as a result, but further excavation is required.

[20] Buchner E., *Die Sonnenuhr des Augustus*, passim. Before this the dial was remodelled and relaid, possibly under Domitian, no doubt as a response to the inaccuracy it soon displayed, which Pliny describes - Pliny, *NH* 36.73.

painted walls lay on the site of the church, that is skirting the edge of the sundial area. This was replaced by an *insula* in the third century that may have encroached onto the sundial, if this still existed. **(Fig.3a)** According to recent research however, this *insula* was abandoned and partly destroyed in the early fourth century, which therefore puts in doubt the feasibility of the Christian centre *in lucinis* being on this site in 366. However mid-fourth century pottery has been found within the *insula* remains, so the space continued to be in use, but perhaps for workshops of some description. The surviving walls of the paleo-Christian edifice here could be fourth or fifth century, so the evidence does allow for the building of some sort of structure for Christian use before 366 within, and re-using, the ruins on this site.[21] Certainly the appellation of Lucina continued to be used for the basilica during the synod of 499, so it is likely that there was a building used by Christians here of the same name in 366. What is certain is that there was no pre-fourth century Christian centre surviving on this site, so the motivation for constructing a Christian building here lay in its location in the city, and perhaps because of the buildings that surrounded it. The existence of the *Horologium* in the vicinity may have meant this was imperial land, and it is thought a reference in the *Liber Pontificalis*, that speaks of a basilica to St. Lawrence being built with the agreement of the emperor Valentinian III, may refer to this problem.[22] If the sundial was buried the only reminder of it by the fourth century was the obelisk, which was dedicated to Sol, and which survived until the eighth century at least.[23] This in itself, and the fact that the area may have been still largely open, may have kept the memory of it being somewhere imbued with pagan connotations and linked with the sun into the middle ages. This was reinforced by what was situated directly opposite on the other side of the road, that is the enormous Temple of Sol built by Aurelian, and probably dedicated in 275. There is some debate as to the size and location of the temple, based on Renaissance maps and drawings of the area as well as archaeology. The most convincing conclusion is that it lay alongside the *via Lata*, with a north north-west/south south-east or more likely east/west orientation, in order to catch the rising sun.[24] **(Fig.3b)**

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[21] Brandt O., 'Jews and Christians in Late Antique Rome and Ostia' in *Opuscula Romana* 29 (2004), pp.20-2.
[22] *LP* I.234. This passage is thought by some though to refer to the church of St. Lawrence outside the walls, now S. Lorenzo fuori la mura- Geertman H., 'The Builders of the *Basilica Maior* in Rome' in de Blaauw S. (ed.), *Hic Fecit Baslicam*, p.9; *LTS* III. 205.
[23] *CIL* VI. 702; *Itin. Eins.* – Val.Zucc. II.181, 186.
[24] *LTUR* IV. 331-3.

As such this whole area from the late third century is one linked with the sun and its worship. The temple and the legacy, or continued existence, of the sundial just across the road, alongside the obelisk which itself was dedicated to the sun, all indicate this.[25] For a church to be built within this is a powerful statement, but not necessarily an aggressive one. The name *lucina* given to the Christian centre here has usually been argued to have been the name of the Christian owner of the property here, but as we now know the previous *insula* on this site was in ruins in the early fourth century. Also, such a name appears suspiciously often in martyrologies, including, interestingly, one concerning a Christian foundation by the bishop Marcellus a few hundred metres down the road.[26] However, it may also be a reference to *Lucina* or *Iuno Lucina*, the goddess of childbirth, as children at birth were regarded as being 'brought into the light'.[27] Her festival and temple do not appear in records of the fourth century however.[28] There is no good evidence at all of any shrine or temple to the goddess in this part of the city, but if *in Lucinis* is an area designation rather than the name of a building, then it does imply there was one here.[29] An ancient temple to *Iuno Lucina* did exist around the Cispian hill to the east where it joins the *Clivus Suburanus*.[30] Its survival into the fourth century is questionable, but if it did the presence of the *Titulus Liberii* and later S. Maria Maggiore just to the east, the latter perhaps catching the sun in the winter solstice, could also be significant.[31]

Whether *Lucina* refers to a person or to the pagan goddess, what we do know is that the name is derived from *lux* or light. Such a term, therefore, fits rather well the pagan character of this part of the northern Campus Martius, that is an area dedicated to the sun. Could the name of the church then be a reference to, and acknowledgement of,

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[25] *CIL* VI.702.

[26] A Lucina is usually helping to safeguard the bones of martyrs around Rome, eg. *LP* I. 151, *AA.SS. Iul.* I.305; *LP* I. 164; *AA.SS. Ian.* II. 9, 11-12. Is there a confusion here between the *titulus Lucinae* and *Marcelli* in the martyr acts?

[27] Her temple was on the Cispian and the *Matronalia* was celebrated here on the 1st March. Origin of cult- Varro, *Ling.* 5.49, 74, Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4.15.5; inscriptions found in the area- *CIL* VI. 357-61; *Matronalia*- Ovid, *Fasti*, 3.247-58.

[28] No reference to *Matronalia* in *Fasti Furii Filocali* for 1st March although the *Iunonalia* on the 8th still remains (Degrassi, *Inscr. Ital.* XIII.2. 242-3). The temple does not appear in the fourth century regionary catalogues, but these are not definitive lists by any means.

[29] Palmer R.E.A., *Studies of the Northern Campus Martius*, Transact. Am. Philos. Soc. 80.2 (1990), p.57 (n.219) with the existence of a *Pariturium*, some sort of building dedicated to child birth, in the area of the church – only mentioned in late 8th/early 9th century Einsiedeln Itinerary: *Itin. Eins.* – Val.Zucc. II.186; Pietri, *RC* I. 28-9. The position of any shrine, whether it was already out of use or whether the church was built on top of it, we cannot say.

[30] Pliny, *NH.* 16.235; *CIL* VI. 357-61, 3694; *LTUR* III. 122-3.

[31] *LTUR* I.181, III. 217-8- see n.51.

its pagan surroundings? Is this an example of a Christian centre rather than cutting itself off from the pagan landscape around it, in fact embracing it and using it to promote a Christian message, that is Christ as the light of the world?[32] We have seen how Sun worship, and Mithraism within that, was the main threat to the Church because some of its beliefs were so similar,[33] so a policy of the Church *using* such ideology for its own ends would have been a powerful one. The decision for Christ's birth to be celebrated on the same day as Sol's is a case in point, as was Constantine's decision to make the *diem solis* – or Sunday and the Christian day of worship since at least the second century – an official day of rest.[34] That is, a deliberate decision being made to construct or create a place for Christian worship here because of the area's strong links to the veneration of the sun is not improbable therefore, particularly when viewed in context with other similar examples found elsewhere in the city. When these are all seen together we can see a pattern emerge.

Basilica Sancti Petri in Vaticano **(see Fig.1a)**

This example shows more than any other the importance of imperial patronage to the Church. The structure was a statement of imperial support for Christianity as much as a physical manifestation of Christian worship for the martyr and saint, Peter. Its location was determined by the position of Peter's burial place, or believed burial place, pre-Constantinian worship there being confirmed by the excavations under the nave of the church, where a cult of Peter dates from at least the mid-third century but possibly before.[35] In essence then, the church was in effect an enormous martyrium and a monumentalisation of a previously humble site of worship. It is unlikely the emperor Constantine was previously aware of the importance, or even existence, of Peter as a focus for Roman Christianity. Nevertheless, it is apparent by the size of the original

[32] Leo *Serm.* 85.4 may be an example of a bishop referring to *S. Laurentii in Lucina* and/or trying to explain its name in these terms. The first definitive evidence for this church being dedicated to St. Lawrence though is in a letter of pope Gregory I (590-604) – see n.19. It is the first instance where we see Lawrence and the appellation *Lucinae* in the same sentence.

[33] See n.8.

[34] Justin Martyr, *Apol.* I.67.3. No official business or work to take place on a Sunday, except that of farmers – *Cod. Iust.* III.12.2 (3 March 321) but manumission and emancipation to be allowed - *Cod. Theod.* II.8.1 (3 July 321).

[35] Apollonj-Ghetti, B.M., Ferrua A., Josi E., Kirschbaum E., *Esplorazioni sotto la confessione di San Pietro in Vaticano, eseguite negli anni 1940-1949*, passim; Ward-Perkins J.B. and Toynbee J., *The Shrine of St. Peter and the Vatican Excavations*, passim; Holloway, R.R., *Constantine and Rome*, pp. 120-155.

basilica, if indeed he did build it, that this was soon made apparent to him, probably by bishop Sylvester.[36]

This whole area of the Vatican hill was previously a necropolis of which St. Peter's grave was one of many, with the Circus of Nero just to the south of it. The church itself was completed in the mid-fourth century.[37] The construction work levelled the hill by filling in the remainder of the necropolis as it descended east towards the Tiber so as to provide an even surface for the church, and so that the space just before the apse aligned itself with the top of Peter's tomb. **(Fig.3c)** This also destroyed the circus of course, which had been out of use for at least a hundred years in any case.[38] Most discussion of the church, however, fails to mention at any length the pagan presence in the area, which seems to have included a temple or centre for the worship of the Great Mother or *Magna Mater*, and possibly a Temple of Apollo. What is interesting is that both these cults have a strong connection to the cult of *Sol Invictus* once more, seen in art, literature and coinage. This of course ties in quite well with Constantine's own predilection for the cult.[39]

The best evidence we have for a pagan presence in the area of the church is for a cult centre to *Magna Mater*, known through inscriptions, a tombstone, and a reference to a *Frigianum* in the regionary catalogues of the fourth century. There is also plenty of archaeological evidence that points to its existence in the area.[40] None of the evidence

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[36] *LP* I.176. If Constans was the builder (see n.37) then he would have been more aware than his father of Peter and his death and burial in Rome.

[37] Thought to have been built between 319-50 because of a lacuna in the Vatican *taurobolium* inscriptions (see n. 40), implying such ceremonies could not have occurred while building work was going on. Also, an inscription describing a twenty-eight year period without a *taurobolium* has been found in the area, but cannot be dated – *CBCR* V. 275. The evidence for this period of construction, and how long it took, is unreliable however, and it was likely to have been Constans rather than Constantine who initiated the building of St. Peter's - Bowersock G.W., 'Peter and Constantine' in Carrié J-M & Lizzi Testa R. (eds.), *Humana Sapit* pp. 209-17; *LTS* IV.186-7.

[38] See n.35 and *CBCR* V.165-279; *LTS* III.11-12.

[39] Apollo had been associated with the god Helios, or Sol, from Hellenistic times which continued into late antiquity - Macrob., *Sat.*, I.17.5, 15. The long-standing conflation of the cult of Magna Mater and Sol is readily apparent from a bronze diadem found in Rome depicting Cybele with a bust of Sol on her chariot (*CCCA* III. 304) as well as Pseudo-Clement, *Hom.* VI.10. Constantine's own association with the cult of Sol is made clear through medallions and his coinage – *RIC* VI. 227 n.892, 228 n.899, 236 n.22, 296 n.111, VII. 296 no.'s 1-2, 298 no.'s 18-20, 27-8, 31, 33-4, 300 no.'s 37, 39-41, 301 no.'s 45-8, 302 no.'s 49-52, 303 no.'s 53-8 **(Fig.3d)**. Also, Constantine is depicted as Sol on his column in Constantinople - Philostorgius, *HE*, II.17 cf. Theodoret, *HE*, I.34. Likewise, Constantine's grant of Sunday as a day of rest (see n. 34) is an ostensibly Christian act. Yet the day is called *dies solis* by him, rather than the term used by Christians *dies dominicus* or Lord's Day (Revelation 1:10. A fifth/sixth century interpretation of *Cod. Theod.* II.8.1 records the day as the more Christian *dies dominicus*). This is further evidence of this emperor's conflation of Christ with Sol.

[40] Altar dedications commemorating a *taurobolium* from the Vatican - *CIL* VI. 497-504 (AD 305-390); A tombstone of L. Valerius Frymus (*CIL* XIV. 429) identifies the cult centre as *transtiberina* (late second century AD); a provincial sanctuary to the goddess named after the Vatican centre - *CIL* XIII. 7281 (AD

points to an exact location, but the positioning of finds indicates a likely presence on the *spina* of Nero's circus, mirroring the shrine in the Circus Maximus. **(Fig.3e)** It is possible then that with the circus' abandonment this shrine was enlarged or modified so as to provide a place for the rite of *taurobolium*, and as a complement to the Palatine temple where such a ceremony did not occur.[41] What is the most interesting element for us is that the Vatican centre continued to operate until 390 with Theodosius' law a year later proving its death knell.[42] That is, for at least several decades the two religious centres were both active in spite of being right next to each other. This pagan sanctuary was not a minor one as we have seen, so the significance of this should not be underestimated. However, in this example it seems merely coincidence that such a juxtaposition existed. The church was built here because this was believed to be the resting place of the apostle Peter, and the shrine to the Great Mother had been there since at least the late second century AD.[43] So there is no sense of either being placed here in consequence of the other's presence. The proximity of the two would therefore seem incidental to our study, but the cult of Magna Mater was linked to that of Sol and when this is appreciated in the context of the other features of St. Peter's, which we are about to discuss, an intriguing picture emerges.

Another link with the cult of *Sol Invictus* in the area is apparent by the possible presence of a Temple to Apollo. The temple is only mentioned in the sixth century *Liber Pontificalis* and we have no other evidence for one existing on the Vatican. This immediately puts its existence into doubt, but the *LP* seems quite specific so there must be some reason for this. The occasions when the temple is referred to, in the lives of Peter, Cornelius and Sylvester, Peter's tomb and church respectively are described as being *in templum/templo Apollonis*, that is, in or possibly against a Temple of Apollo.[44] This has been variously identified with a Mithraeum in the area; the *Phrygianum* described above; a monument on the *spina* of Nero's circus; a mausoleum in the necropolis known as H belonging to a C. Valerius Herma which has a painting of

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236); in the fourth century catalogues of the city as *Frigianum*, a misspelling of *Phrygianum*, a reference to the origins of the cult in Phrygia - *Not./Cur.*. XIV – Nordh, p.95.10; archaeological evidence - Liverani P., *La topografia antica del Vaticano*, pp. 104-5, 127, 149. Also the feature in the middle of the piazza in front of the old St. Peter's known as the *Pigna* may have used spolia from a shrine or altar to Cybele - Kinney D., 'Spolia' in Tronzo W. (ed.), *St. Peter's in the Vatican*, , pp.31, 33.

[41] Liverani P., 'Vaticano pagano, Vaticano cristiano' in Ensoli S. & La Rocca E (eds.), *Aurea Roma*, p.295.

[42] *CIL* VI. 503; *Cod. Theod.* XVI. 10.10, 11.

[43] See n.40.

[44] *LP* I.50, 52, 118, 150 & 176.

Apollo-Harpocrates in it; and mausoleum M, which has a depiction of Christ as Helios/Apollo within it. The third century funerary monument that was built within the circus, later known as the Rotunda di Sant'Andrea and still visible in the drawings of old St. Peter's, has also been argued to have been the monument mistaken for a temple to the god. Further, one of the twisted columns that surrounded Peter's tomb in the old basilica was dedicated to Apollo, so this may be another reason behind the *LP*'s description of Peter's tomb and church being near to such a temple. However a fifth century inscription and a passage in the *Passio sanctorum Petri et Pauli* of Pseudo-Marcellus, which respectively use the term *Vaticanum* for a Temple of Cybele and refer to the Temple of Apollo also as *Vaticanum*, seem to argue convincingly in favour of the *Phrygianum* theory.[45]

The existence of a mosaic of Christ as Apollo/Helios in mausoleum M in the necropolis, not far from Peter's resting place, is a feature of the area, however, that deserves further analysis. **(Fig.3f)** Outlines of the figure of Jonah and fishermen on the side walls of this tomb means we can confidently assign it as Christian. Yet on its ceiling is what at first looks like the very pagan image of Sol, a god closely associated with Helios/Apollo, characteristically riding a chariot towards the heavens with rays emanating from his head. Nonetheless, because of the Christian nature of the tomb, this is thought to be an image of Christ shown in the same guise, in other words Jesus as the light of the world. An association with Elijah's ascent into heaven in a fiery chariot in the Old Testament is also apparent.[46] Also, the vine leaves in the background are thought to be a reference to Jesus describing himself as the 'True Vine'.[47] The question as to whose imagery influenced who, or whether this is merely coincidence, is an issue for another time, but it will suffice to say that the pagan and Christian creeds overlapped here, and for me provide a metaphor for St. Peter's in general.[48] What seems to be happening with this church is that either Constantine, Constans, or the Church authorities took advantage of these similarities so as to create a very Christian centre of worship, but with a continuing amalgamation with the Sol/Helios cult which may have

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[45] *LTS* I. 79-80; Kinney, 'Spolia', p.30; *CIL* XIII. 1751; Lipsius R.A., Bonnet M., (eds.), *Acta Apostolorum apocrypha*, I.176.

[46] 2 Kings 2:11. Clement of Alexandria, in the late second or early third century, spoke of Christ driving his chariot towards the heavens and immortality- Clem. Alex., *Protrepticus*, 12.

[47] John 15:1.

[48] Even in the mid-second to early third century Tertullian had to admit that many thought the Christians worshipped the Sun god because they prayed towards the east and made Sunday a feast day – Tert. *Ad Nat*, I.13.

existed on the site before the basilica's construction. The circus of Nero of course, like all circuses, was also dedicated to the Sun god.[49] This strategy may have been either a genuine reflection of a religious conviction Constantine or Constans held for a cult of Sol-Christus, or an attempt to make it easier to convert those pagans who were adherents of probably the two most popular pagan cults of late antiquity, those of Sol and Mithras, the latter being an associated deity.

Mausoleum M in particular then, or the large tomb of the Valerii, known as mausoleum H, could well have been Christian meeting places for services connected to the Petrine cult, in the same way as the tombs of other martyrs around the city also attracted worshippers in and around their burial places. The pagan/Christian imagery that was visible around them on the Vatican also seems to have been reflected in the later church and the beliefs of Constantine himself. Indeed if the construction of St. Peter's was under Constans, as has been suggested, then this allows more easily Constantine's own obvious devotion to the *Sol Invictus* cult to be reflected in the church by his son. It is clear Constantine, and possibly his son as well, saw no contradiction in being adherents of both creeds. Constantine's likely vision of a 'double sun' or 'sun halo', that appears as a cross over the sun in the sky, surely explains his own personal assimilation of Sol and Christ.[50]

What however seems the most compelling evidence for St. Peter's to have been built as a cultic centre for Sol-Christus is, together with all the evidence we have seen for the area being one where Sol-Helios/Apollo and Magna Mater were predominant, the orientation of the church. It faced due east towards the rising sun and was also at the top of the Vatican hill, so would have caught the first rays at dawn very easily. The sun would have entered through the great doors and passed down the nave, and it is thought on the equinox the rays would have struck the main altar over the body of the apostle.[51] Such alignment characterises all centres of sun worship of course.[52] Indeed pope Leo in the fifth century complains in a sermon of his congregation using the church as a place of sun worship, and then praying to Christ only once inside.[53] The church did not have

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[49] Tertullian, *De Spect.* VIII.1.

[50] Weiss P., 'The Vision of Constantine' (trans. Birley A.R.), *JRA* 16.1 (2003), pp.237-59. The widespread and unashamed use of pagan spolia in old St. Peter's is a further indication of the Constantinian family's acceptance of pagan imagery and ideas in a Christian context- Kinney D., 'Spolia', passim.

[51] Kinney D., 'Spolia', p.27 (n.71) with the similar idea that S. Maria Maggiore captured the sun in the same way on the winter solstice.

[52] Eg. Stonehenge, 'Celtic' barrow tombs, the temple of Amun-Ra at Karnak etc.

[53] Leo, *Sermo* 27.4.

to lie in this precise direction for Peter's tomb to be aligned with the front of the apse, and a north-south alignment would probably have involved the destruction of fewer tombs. Furthermore, as we have said, the basilica lies directly east of the *titulus lucinae* and the Temple of Sol, which itself is likely to have had an east/west orientation. If so, the similarity between this temple and St. Peter's is startling. From a bird's-eye point of view, if the Temple of Sol was east/west, the church and the temple are on virtually the same alignment, something that may have been appreciable on the ground in antiquity. A connection between the *basilica sancti Petri* and the *titulus Lucinae* however, seems to have been formalised by the late sixth century, when a processional route between them, known as the Great Litany, regularly took place on the 25th April. Indeed, the procession is said to have been of great age even then. It may have originated in the fourth century, the route perhaps deliberately coinciding with that of the pagan Robigalia. A fifth century date is more likely though.[54]

It does seem more than a coincidence that all these features should come together here. If we look at the, albeit circumstantial, evidence, it seems possible that Constantine or his son used one of their first Christian building projects to promote their own or their father's continued belief in *Sol Invictus*, in whom he is likely to have seen Christ. Equally, this may have been a part of a policy to integrate a powerful pagan belief into a Christian framework so as to diminish its power. Either way, a strong integration of pagan and Christian creeds on this site is a credible hypothesis.

3.3.2 Churches and Mithraea

Another interesting phenomenon we see in late antique Rome is the proximity between many churches and Mithraea, a cult, as we know, that was also affiliated with that of *Sol Invictus*. Once more then we see the pattern of a Christian centre and a place dedicated to the worship of the Sun god associated topographically. A distinction needs to be made, though, between those examples of this phenomenon that are more convincing and those that are not. As we have said, pagan space existed throughout the city, and Mithraea seem to have been no exception. Based on their frequency in Ostia there are thought to have been as many as seven hundred in Rome.[55] This is probably an

[54] Baldovin J.F., *The Urban Character of Christian Worship*, p.159 & refs.
[55] Coarelli F. 'Topografia Mitriaca di Roma' in Bianci U (ed.), *Mysteria Mithrae*, pp.76-7. Twenty-six have been identified so far.

overestimate as Ostia was rather exceptional being a large port, and as such a focus for foreign religious influences, but there is every reason to think there were very many because of their small size and capacity and the popularity of the cult by this time. In this way any proximity of a new church to one of these Mithraea could be entirely coincidental and probably unavoidable. Any examples that show deliberate intent by Christian builders to create a Christian centre in an area in consequence of a Mithraeum being there, must be confined to those cases where a relationship seems obvious and intended. These Mithraic centres were not outwardly visible and were not meant to be. However, there are those instances where a church was built on top of a Mithraeum, or so near to one that the Christian authorities must have been aware of its presence and could be argued to have constructed their church to symbolically destroy it, or to aggressively challenge it for worshippers. Either way, the convincing examples we will examine below, of which there are three, do indicate a more hostile and offensive strategy by the Church against the cult of Sol-Mithras. This is opposed to the more conciliatory policy that seems to have been played out with the *titulus Lucinae* and the *Basilica Sancti Petri*.[56]

Titulus Priscae

This church is situated towards the summit of the Aventine, and the building we see today dates to about 1100. Nonetheless, we know there was a *titulus* on this site from the fifth century as we have two inscriptions mentioning it of that date, as well as the attendance list for the council of 499 which describes a presbyter *tituli priscae*. The name of the foundation is thought to refer to a third century martyr. Because the remains of the current church only go back as far as the twelfth century, it is thought that the original *titulus* was within some sort of Roman structure until as late as the ninth century or beyond, and this was destroyed when the current church was built. Some Christian remains within an ancient structure, as well as an oratory, were discovered in

[56] A small Iseum and Mithraeum were situated just to the east of the church of S. Martino ai Monti, the fourth century *titulus Silvestri et Equitii*. By the fourth century however, both the Iseum and Mithraeum, the latter underground of course, were situated within a rich *domus* (Ensoli S., 'I santuari di Iside e Serapide a Roma e la resistenza pagana in età tardoantica' in Ensoli S. & La Rocca E. (eds.), *Aurea Roma*, p. 280 with figs. 22-6). In this way they were invisible to the outside world by the time the church was created. This, combined with their distance from the current church – probably built on the site of the fourth century *titulus* – of about ten metres, means any relationship between the pagan and Christian centres is likely to have been coincidental. Nevertheless, more excavation may provide us with a clearer picture of both sites (**Fig.3g**).

the immediate vicinity, but their date and precise provenance and context are unknown, so we cannot say this was the first *titulus priscae* with any reliability.[57] Its exact location therefore remains a mystery, but it was certainly very close to the existing church of the same name.

Importantly for us though is the existence of a Mithraeum directly under the apse of the current church. The Mithraeum was installed in the basement substructures of a two house complex of the late first or early second century AD about a century later, and was redecorated and embellished in about 220 AD. It was of typical rectangular form, with lateral seating and the cult niche at the back facing the entrance, which was flanked by statues of Cautes and Cautopates. **(Fig.3h)** The cult niche contained a representation of a reclining sea god, or possibly Saturn, alongside the usual image of Mithras killing the bull. **(Fig. 3i)** A dedicatory inscription was found to *Deus Sol Invictus Mithras* below it. A room to the north of the Mithraeum, which now consists of an empty niche in its north wall with a hole in the centre, is itself joined to a room with shallow circular pits in the floor. The niche is thought to have contained a representation of *Sol*, and the room off this may have been the place for initiation into the cult of *Sol-Mithras*, with the pits being a part of some sort of water rite. **(Fig.3j)** It has been postulated that another part of the basement to the north was used for Christian services from the third century, and this was the *titulus priscae*, but there is no good evidence for this.[58]

The story of the Mithraeum's demise is equally interesting. The *speleum*, judging from the evidence, was destroyed in a thorough and calculating manner by Christians. The cult niche and other monuments were smashed, the room was then completely filled with amphorae and the entrance was bricked up. To fill a room this big with pottery is a huge task, and the immense work involved implies a powerful need to obliterate the Mithraeum's power and memory. Much of the pottery is Christian in origin, indicated by the presence of Chi-Rho and cross symbols on many pieces. It dates from the late Republic to the early fifth century AD, the majority being from the later period. We can say then that the Mithraeum was destroyed about 400, which seems to mirror the actions of the Urban Prefect Gracchus who ordered another example to be

[57] *ICUR.* II. 5153, 5160; *MGH.AA.*XII. 413; *CBCR* III. 274-5, 263; Vermaseren M.J. and Van Essen C.C., *The Excavations in the Mithraeum of the Church of Santa Prisca in Rome*, p. 23; *LTUR* IV. 162-3.
[58] Vermaseren and Van Essen., *Excavations*, pp. 114-5, 140-1; Nash E., *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, II.79-84; *CBCR* III.274; *LTUR* III.268-9.

dismantled elsewhere in the city in 376/7.[59] This filling up of the space could simply have been to provide a solid foundation for a building above however, probably the first Christian centre here. It is the deliberate destruction of the cult niche, statues and other monuments that gives this activity a more sinister edge though. It is this vandalism, combined with the filling up of the Mithraeum, that makes the location of a *titulus priscae* here so interesting.

The lack of any compelling evidence for the Christian *titulus'* precise location is frustrating. However, a building of Severan date was constructed over the two houses, putting part of them at least out of use, and this may have been the Roman building that contained the *titulus* until the creation of the basilica about 1100. A late antique wall was built out of alignment with, and straight through, the eastern part of the Roman houses, so indicating the abandonment of the rest of the complex. The wall ran just to the east of the current church apse, suggesting it was an enclosure wall for the ancient church on the site, and that this church lay on the site of the existing S. Prisca.[60] **(Fig.3k)** The construction of the apse lies exactly over the ante-room and entrance to the Mithraeum, as at S. Clemente, so the Christian builders cannot have been unaware of its existence. The Christian overthrow of the Mithraeum implies the *titulus* was first created at the same time, and although it cannot be proved that the initial Christian centre here was founded in this area because of the Mithraeum's presence, it is implausible to think that the Christian donors were oblivious of the existence of such an elaborate and large pagan centre before deciding on this site to modify. The deliberate destruction of the *speleum* was intended to provide a powerful message, and to build a church on top of it would have been an even more potent symbolic statement. Also, Mithras' obvious links with *Sol Invictus*, shown clearly by the surviving inscription here, ties in once more with the pattern we see emerging of Christian centres interacting with those of the Sun God because of their similar beliefs. In this example the reaction was violent.

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[59] Vermaseren & Van Essen, *Excavations*, pp. 43, 241-2; Jerome, *Ep.* 107.2 with Prud. *Contra Symm.* I.561-5 and *Cod. Theod.* IX. 35.3; *LTUR* IV. 163. It is thought by some that this was a much older Christian site based on the letter of St. Paul describing a house of Prisca where Christians meet (*Romans* 16:3-5), so the *titulus* was built on the same site. However this is pure speculation and it is far more likely, as we have seen, to have been a fourth or early fifth century construction named in honour of this Prisca, the third century martyr, or simply the owner of the house or land where it was built.

[60] Especially if Vermaseren is right in his interpretation of the two house complex above the Mithraeum as the *privata Traiana*, which survived into the mid-fourth century from its, albeit inconsistent, appearance in the Notitia, but is not present in the later Curiosum list - Vermaseren & Van Essen, *Excavations*, pp. 14-18, 107-10, 113, 115; *Not.* XIII.- Nordh, p.94.6 (in two manuscripts).

Titulus Clementis

A comparable example can be found with this church, situated about 300m south-east of the Flavian Amphitheatre. Again we see a Mithraeum below the apse of the church. There was certainly some sort of Christian structure here by the late fourth century. This is indicated by a now lost fourth century slave collar mentioning an *acolitus* in connection with a *dominicum Clementis*, Jerome describing the church in 385 or 392 and implying it had existed for some time, and a Sirician inscription reporting a priest of Clement, although this is heavily restored.[61] The church is thought to have been named after either the martyred bishop of Rome, Clement, or a Titius Flavius Clemens put to death under Domitian and claimed as a martyr by Eusebius.[62] The idea that one of the Roman buildings under the church was the house of one of these individuals is pure supposition. These structures include a *domus* of the second half of the first century AD, later being enlarged and added to in the later third, when it becomes a building whose use is unclear. It is argued by some that this became a Christian *domus ecclesia*, but there is no evidence for such a statement. What we do know is that a formal basilica was built within it, and on top of the first century house, in the late fourth or early fifth century.[63]

Next to these buildings to the west, and separated by a small alleyway, was a late first century structure, probably a house or an *insula*. Within its courtyard either in the late second or early third century, was installed a Mithraeum. **(Fig.3l)** The surrounding rooms may also have been associated with it, and one of these was turned into baths. The *speleum* had the usual characteristics of a rectangular shape with side benches on the long ends, with the cult niche at the short end facing the entrance. Several niches and remains of mosaics imply the space was highly decorated with Mithraic imagery. There were also apertures in the roof which were designed so that the rays of the sun hit the main cult image at the front. This sanctuary also came to a violent end. A Mithraic altar was found outside the cult centre and fragments of other cult objects were also found, including a bust of Sol. Some elements had been restored

[61] *CIL* XV 7192; Jerome, *De Vir. Ill.* 15; inscription of Siricius (384-99) - De Rossi, *Bull di Arch. Crist.* (1870), p.147ff. A fragment of a possibly Damasian inscription (366-84) was found in the pavement of the first church as well (*CBCR* I. 118). Also a letter of bishop Zosimus in 417 describes a meeting of the Roman clergy *in sancti Clementis basilica* - *Coll. Avell.*, 45.2.
[62] Eusebius, *HE* III.18.4.
[63] *LTUR* I. 278-9; *CBCR* I. 117-36.

though, which suggests a persecution of two phases, the first being an unsuccessful attempt to close the centre, with the second one destroying the sanctuary for good. It was filled with earth and the entrance was walled up, as at the Mithraeum under Sancta Prisca. The rooms around the *speleum* continued in use however, and could suggest a longer period of cult activity than has been thought. It is widely believed that mithraic worship ending here coincided with the construction of the Christian basilica, but we do not know precisely when either started or finished, so a period of strained coexistence should not be ruled out. After all, this fits rather well the destruction and later restoration of the mithraic materials in the area.[64]

Again, as with Sancta Prisca, the question arises as to whether this church was *deliberately* built on this spot so as to intimidate and eventually close down the Mithraeum. This we are unable to prove currently, but certainly the apse of the church was precisely constructed over the ante-room and monumental entrance to the Mithraeum, as at S. Prisca, which meant the altar of the church symbolically lay over these features. What we can also say is that an unsuccessful attempt was made to destroy the cult centre, and for a short period at least both centres it seems were active at the same time. In any case, the Christians were certainly aware of the Mithraeum's presence, even though it would have been invisible from the outside and from the Christian *titulus*. As such, an argument could be made for a deliberate placement here to intimidate, or symbolically destroy, a Mithraeum. The intense dislike of Mithraism by the Christian elite, which would have been particularly acute by the fourth century, and the similar pattern of the ritual destruction of a *speleum* below a Christian centre we have seen with the *titulus priscae*, seems to indicate some sort of policy. Again, a site linked with the worship of Sol has been confronted by Christian builders.

Titulus Damasi

Our final example of a potential relationship between a church and a Mithraeum is equally interesting. The evidence we have here is scantier, but the juxtaposition between the two is undeniable. This ecclesiastical structure, as we will see, is one where a strong connection to the circus games is apparent. In spite of this, the discovery of the

[64] Junyent E., *Il titolo di San Clemente in Roma*, pp.55-81; Snyder G.F., *Ante Pacem*, pp.76-7; *LTUR* III. 257-8.

remains of a Mithraeum alongside the ancient church points to another association which mirrors those above. Once more there is the familiar picture of an early church next to a *speleum*, which has been violently suppressed.

The first formal Christian basilica on this site is probably Damasian, but there is a strong argument to suggest some sort of Christian centre was founded here a generation earlier. An inscription read in the church in the ninth century, but now lost, tells us that Damasus' father, Antonius, rose from *exceptor* to priest, and Damasus himself was priest, 'in this place', which implies a previous Christian place of worship on this spot, as opposed to it just being his house as has been suggested. Another inscription, also now lost, again implies a pre-existing Christian edifice, with it describing Damasus merely embellishing the building with columns and possibly an archive, rather than creating a new *titulus*.[65]

Recent excavations have conclusively found Damasus' foundation and evidence of an earlier building, which included a large colonnaded portico. It lay east/west alongside the ancient road that became the Via del Pellegrino in the middle ages, as it was the main route to the *pons Aelius* and the Vatican from the centre of Rome. Side walls and part of the nave floor have been found. The church was completely destroyed in the late fifteenth century when the Palazzo della Cancelleria was built and a new church was constructed just to the north.[66] The Damasian church now lies underneath the courtyard of the Palazzo. **(Fig.3m)**

To the east of this, under the entrance to the Palazzo, were found parts of a wall running north-south, traces of a mosaic pavement, along with many Mithraic items and inscriptions. Fragments of the relief of Mithras killing the bull as well as other cult objects and decoration were also found in the area. An altar mentioning the founder, and priest of *Sol Invictus Mithrae*, Aebutius Restitutius Proficentius, an otherwise unknown individual, came to light as well. The creation of the sanctuary has been dated to the mid third century from the objects found, which are all contemporary to the founder, so it has been argued that the Mithraeum had a short life. This implies that it was out of use before the church of Damasus was constructed. However, the reasons for thinking the Mithraeum had a brief existence are not conclusive and it is just as likely to have continued to be used until the late fourth century, albeit in a less overt and intense

[65] *ICUR* II. 135 n. 7, 151 n. 23; *LP* I. 212.
[66] *LTUR* III. 179-181.

manner after Constantine.[67] We do not know exactly when it went out of use, but it could coincide with the first Christian utilisation of the building or space a few metres to the west, either under Damasus or his father. The Mithraeum was probably located in the basement of a property just before the entrance to the fourth century church. There is less evidence here for the Mithraeum having a violent end however, but the fragmentary nature of the central relief may indicate this, such a deliberate destruction being a feature of the fate of the cult niches of the Mithraea under S. Prisca and S. Clemente. Further evidence of the Mithraeum and how it ended its life was no doubt lost in the late fifteenth-century when the construction of the Palazzo began.

Again we cannot say for sure whether the Christian presence here was as a consequence of the Mithraeum's existence, but it is likely that both soon became aware of each other due to their immediate proximity, with the worshippers of each entering and leaving. Another possibility is that once the Christians at Damasus' or his father's centre realised there was a Mithraeum next door a decision was then made to enlarge the 'church' into a formal basilica as a symbolic gesture of strength and as a prelude to destroying the sanctuary. Such a scenario could equally apply to S. Clemente. Either way, this example along with the other two, do seem to imply a pattern, albeit an improvised one perhaps.

There is a theory that this Mithraeum was for the college of the circus green faction, whose stables were nearby. This may have delayed the *speleum* being destroyed by Damasus, who seems to have been indebted to these *quadrigarii* for his election as bishop.[68] In other words, a period of reluctant coexistence may have occurred, until Damasus' death at least, similar to what may have happened at S. Clemente.

The intense competition and striking similarities between Mithraism and Christianity makes these three examples unlikely to be coincidental. A picture of Christians finding Mithraea, destroying or de-facing the cult objects therein, then filling and walling them up and building a church next to them, or on top of them, seems a probable scenario. A later example, so beyond our scope here, of S. Stefano Rotondo, completed under Simplicius (468-83), seems to repeat the pattern. It has a Mithraeum that was deliberately and violently suppressed about a century earlier underneath it.[69]

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[67] Nogara B. & Magi E.F., 'Un Mitreo nell'area del Palazzo della Cancelleria Apostolica' in *Hommages à Joseph Bidez et à Franz Cumont*, pp.229-44.

[68] This church was also known as 'in prasino'- *ICUR* II. 134 no.5; *Coll. Avell.* 1.5.7- see Chapter 4 (pp.144-7).

[69] *LTUR* III. 261-2, IV. 373-6.

However, this gap in time probably meant the initiator of the church project was unaware of the cult centre's existence, and in any case such Mithraea were no longer an ideological threat in the mid to late fifth century. Also, there are other, more plausible, reasons for choosing the site where S. Stefano was built, which I have already briefly touched upon.

Other authors have included examples of a Mithraeum/church relationship that do fall within my timeframe, but I have not included them here as they rely on less convincing criteria. That is, the churches are only *close* to a discovered Mithraeum in the city, a fact, due to the probable numbers of Mithraea in Rome, that could be coincidental.[70] The exterior invisibility of these sanctuaries and their secretiveness meant that only buildings right next to them would have been conscious of their presence.

There are two other early churches in Rome that seem to have had some sort of relationship with a pagan centre. Both of these were very close, and as such visually linked, to two major cult sites in the city.

3.3.3 Churches and Important Cultic Sites

Titulus Marci

This church is said to have been founded by the bishop Marcus in 336, the sole year of his reign, *iuxta pallacinis*, an area at the end of the *via Lata* behind the Capitoline. An inscription dated to around 348 describing an *Antius lector de pallacine* may be a reference to the church. It was totally rebuilt in the ninth century by Gregory IV.[71] We have no reason to doubt its early fourth century existence, and the precise description of its land grants by the *LP* implies the compiler had access to a genuine document.[72] Excavations that finished thirteen years ago brought to light more of the pre-Gregorian, Marcian, remains, showing definitively that the first church on the site

[70] Apollonj-Ghetti B., 'Gli edifici di culto' in *Atti IX Congr. Int. Arch. Crist. Roma* (1975), pp.510-11. He does however mention how the Mithraeum of Felicissimus at Ostia is in the same insula as the Christian basilica, but another Mithreum-church complex in Ostia, that of the 'Mitreo delle Pareti Dipinte', is more convincing in this regard – Meiggs R., *Roman Ostia*, pp.396-9.
[71] *LP* I. 202; *ICUR* I. 62 no.97; *LP* II. 74.
[72] *CBCR* III. 217.

was a single naved structure, and discovering the fourth century apse of Marcus' church lay perpendicular to a cobbled street, perhaps the *vicus Pallacinae*. **(Fig.3n)** This lay to the south, a reversal of the ninth century and existing structure, which was a new revelation. There was a baptistery, and probably a sacristy, either side of the apse, the former probably fifth or sixth century. Remains of a pre-existing structure were found also, argued by some to be the house of the Turcii on the basis of two inscriptions found to the south.[73] This seems rather doubtful, however, as the family are likely to have still been pagans into the late fourth century.[74]

For our purposes what is important is that the fourth century entrance to the church faced north towards the Campus Martius, rather than south as previously believed. In the immediate area just to the north of the church there is good evidence to think that there stood the very large and well known Altar of Mars, and just to the north of this his temple. The importance of the altar is clear from its antiquity and its centrality to the military affairs of the Roman state, particularly in the Republic, the *campus* being originally the Roman army's training ground. The altar certainly existed in 443 BC, and may even date to the regal period. Various sources point to its existence in the *campus* in the area just beyond the Republican *pomerium*, that is, the Servian boundary of the city. Such a location was customary for monuments or temples associated with military matters and their gods. These sources point to a site for the altar within the area bounded by the *Divorum* and *Iseum* in the west, the *via Lata* to the east, and the *vicus Pallacinae* and Temple of Hadrian to the south and north respectively. The positioning of a possible Temple to Mars connected to the altar complicates matters, but the archaeological evidence appears to provide a clearer picture. A large south wall, more than sixty metres long, of a square structure of imperial date, with evidence of a much older smaller construction beneath it, was found on the Via del Plebiscito in 1925. **(Fig.3o)** The monument seems to have had a massive perimeter wall within which were niches, probably for statues as well as a larger one possibly for sacrifices. The design of the structure implies some sort of procession took place within

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[73] *LTUR* III. 212-3; Cecchelli M., 'S. Marco a Piazza Venezia: una basilica romana del periodo constantiniano' in Bonamente G. & Fusco F. (eds.), *Constantino il Grande*, pp. 299-310; Paroli L. & Vendettelli L. (eds.), *Roma dall'antichità al medioevo*, II.635; *CIL* VI. 1772, 1773.

[74] Turcius Secundus, alive in the late fourth century, was the first Christian in the family - *PLRE* I. Secundus 4. An attractive theory would be that the Esquiline Treasure, which may refer to this individual, shows him marrying a Christian and perhaps converting and giving his house here to the Church. However the date of Marcus' foundation is too early for the treasure, there is no reason to think Turcius converted, and the location of his house is likely to have been further to the south where the inscriptions were found.

it, consistent with that carried out before a lustral sacrifice, something that was associated with Mars. The remains of a large elaborately decorated travertine wall, found during the construction of the Pamphili palace further north in the seventeenth century, may be the remains of the Mars temple *in campo*.[75]

This location for the altar would mean that the distance between its southern wall and the door of Marcus' church was about thirty-five metres. Whether Marcus intended to build the church on this spot for that reason is impossible to say, but he cannot have been unaware of the altars existence, it being so close. The altar seems to have been in use in the mid-fourth century as the *Natalis Martis* of the first of March appears in the calendar of 354, and the altar would have been central to the celebrations.[76] There was a period then when both centres were active, and even when not in use the altar was still an imposing, profoundly pagan, monument bristling with statuary. It was also an historic monument to Rome's proud military history, and as such was certainly a powerful feature of the urban landscape. The association of paganism with Rome's past successes always sat uneasily with many Christians, with many writers dedicating whole works to dispel this view.[77] Was this Marcus' way of confronting such an issue, or was he trying to associate Christianity with that success, with the church being a symbol of the new religion's takeover as guardian of the state? Whatever the case, the altar and the church could have been visually or mentally linked in the minds of passers-by. Christians from the north attending services would probably have to walk past it, and it may even have been visible from the church doors. Whether such a relationship was intended or not, for the worshippers at the church in its early life, some sort of association was likely.

Our final example of a spatial link between Christian and pagan space in Rome is one where a pagan procession route, as well as its focus, seem to have had an association with an early Christian church.

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[75] *LTUR* III.223-5 & notes.
[76] Degrassi, *Inscr. Ital.* XIII.2.242-3. The day has disappeared less than a century later though - *Ibid*, XIII.2.266.
[77] Eg. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, Orosius, *Historiarum Adversum Paganos.*

Titulus Anastasiae

This church is situated at the foot of the south-west corner of the Palatine hill, with the Circus Maximus just to its south. **(Fig.3p)** From a fifth century inscription – which was read in the church in the ninth century, but is now lost – the Christian structure is thought to date from the time of Damasus or possibly before. The inscription describes Damasus' decoration of the building and its later embellishment by Hilarius. The fact that it has three presbyters in 499 also indicates the importance of the foundation. Archaeology points to a mid-fourth century church being built on Antonine and Severan substructures. It was built on top of, and perpendicular to, the first floor of rooms of the insula, itself some sort of shop complex perhaps. **(Fig.3q)** It was bounded by two Roman streets to its north and south which determined its axis. A baptistery may have been added by the prefect Longinianus in the early fifth century, although the inscription could refer to the example at St. Peter's.[78] Building across the rooms rather than creating a naved building within several meant the pre-existing Roman structure must have been in ruins or was deliberately destroyed by the Christian builders in order to use this site. This spot's centrality may have been the reason for this, or possibly the pagan nature of the area.

Both the Circus and the Palatine were full of pagan temples and shrines, the closest to the church was the *Lupercal* however, the two being separated by a steeply stepped street, the *scalae caci*.[79] **(see Fig.3p)** The exact location of the shrine or the form it took is unknown. The fact that it may have simply been the embellishment of a natural cave feature, representing the place where Faustulus discovered Romulus and Remus being suckled by the she-wolf, is the likely reason for the lack of remains. Christian destruction should not be ruled out either. The most likely spot is thought to be the area of the Caecilian stairs, about a hundred and fifty metres from the church.[80]

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[78] *ICUR* II. 150 nos. 18, 19; *ILCV* 92; *MGH.AA.* XII. 413, 414; Whitehead P.B., 'The Church of S. Anastasia in Rome', *AJA* 31, pp.405-11; *CBCR* I. 43-8; Snyder, *Ante Pacem*, pp.80-1; *LTUR* I.37-8. For the theory that the church existed in 351 see Matthews J.F., 'The Poetess Proba and Fourth-Century Rome' in Duval Y., Lepelley C., Piétri L. (eds.), *Institutions, societé et vie politique dans l'empire romain au IVe siècle ap. J-C*, pp. 299-303.

[79] The various shrines within and around the Circus were separated from the church by its outer wall so visually and spatially they were separate. Those shrines just outside the Circus, like the Temple of Flora and *Sol et Luna*, were on its Aventine side.

[80] *LTUR* III. 198-9. Both the *Lupercal* and the 'House of Romulus' appear in the fourth century lists of the contents of Rome- *Not./Cur.* X. – Nordh, p.89.9, p.90.7. The recent (Jan '07) discovery of a richly

More interestingly, we know that this shrine and its associated festival, the *Lupercalia*, were still active in the late fifth century, at least a hundred years after the foundation of S.Anastasia. Pope Gelasius' letter, the *Contra Lupercalia*, written in 494, shows both the particular persistence of this festival and its long-standing popularity. This clearly exercised the Christian authorities in the city.[81] The festival took place on the 15th February, and involved the sacrifice of a goat and a dog at the *Lupercal*. This was followed by a group of young men of high social class dressed only in goat skins running around the base of the Palatine, or between the *Lupercal* and the *via Sacra*, or perhaps all over the Palatine with no specific route, whipping people with branches or goat skin thongs. Another route may have consisted of only a part of the Palatine and a procession up and down the *via Sacra* from Caesar's time, but any of these routes could not have avoided the church. Late Republican and early imperial sources are unclear as to the festival's religious meaning and significance; was it a fertility or purification rite? Certainly by Gelasius' time in the late fifth century AD such obscurity can only have been amplified. As such, modern scholars still find the *Lupercalia* a puzzle. Some believe the rite to be magical, religious, associated with kingship, connected to the dead, fertility or to the early agricultural life of Rome.[82] Whatever the case, on the 15th February at least, there would have been some friction between S.Anastasia and the *Lupercal* with its associated festival, although perhaps only felt amongst the Christian authorities, as Gelasius' letter implies Christian participation. Many of the Christian, as well as many of the pagan participants by this period, probably saw the festival as an archaic rite that signified Roman identity and history more than a religious ceremony.[83] However, there was certainly an interaction between the festival and the church on the 15th February and with the shrine on the other days of the year simply because of the short distance between the two. This was the most central church in Rome until the sixth century, so its mere presence is symbolic in any case. Its association, whether

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decorated cave vault under the *Domus Augusti* is more likely to be a private nymphaeum than the *Lupercal* cave.

[81] *Lettre contre les Lupercales et dix-hiut messes du Sacramentaire léonien*, (ed. & trans. Pomarès G.), pp.162-89. For the idea that the letter was in fact written by Felix III, Gelasius predecessor, see Duval Y-M., 'Des lupercales de Constantinople aux lupercales de Rome' in *Rev. Et. Lat.* 55 (1977), pp. 246-50; *Coll. Avell.* 101; festival recorded in a calendar of 448-9- Degrassi, *Incr. Ital.* XIII.2. 265.

[82] Varro, *Ling.* 6.13.34; Plutarch, *Rom.* XXI.3-8, *Caes.* LXI.3-4; Aug. *Civ. Dei.* XVIII.12; Scullard H.H., *Festivals and Ceremonies of the Roman Republic*, pp.76-8 & refs; Harmon D.P., 'The Public Festivals of Rome' *ANRW* II.16.2, pp.1441-6; Wiseman T.P., *Remus. A Roman Myth*, pp. 82, 85-8.

[83] The original route may have been associated with the foundation of the city see Rykwert J., *The Idea of a Town*, pp.93-6.

planned or not, with one of, if not the most persistent pagan festival and its shrine seems more than a coincidence. Perhaps the existence of an important church here made the festival and its shrine acceptable and contributed to its longevity? Was Damasus or a predecessor trying to counter the festival and shrine's influence and power, which backfired, or perhaps trying to use that power for the Church's own ends? Was this perhaps to link Christianity with one of the foundation myths of the city, in the same way as various bishops, especially Damasus, had tried to do with Peter and Paul as the new founders of a Christian Rome? Also, the *Circus Maximus* was effectively dedicated to Sol, as Tertullian states, so we should not be surprised to find a Christian church near to such a place.[84] As we will see in the following chapter, there are likely to have been other reasons for this church being built next to the Circus, which provide compelling alternative grounds for explaining its presence here. Therefore any connection the church had with the *Lupercal* and its festival may have been coincidental and incidental. Nevertheless, whatever the thought behind S. Anastasia, a visual association would have almost certainly existed with the shrine throughout the year, and physically with the festival itself on the 15th February.

3.4 Conclusion

From all the above examples of early Christian foundations in Rome there is a good evidence to think that in these cases Christian builders had an agenda in relation to certain pagan temples and shrines and the beliefs allied to them, that continued to have many adherents. Of the seven cases of this, five are connected with the worship of Sol, either in the guise of *Sol-Mithras* or *Sol Invictus*. The similarities in belief between the worship of this god and that of Christ may explain this pattern. The Church knew the continued worship of Sol threatened its own aim to be the sole religion of the empire, with many of its believers either being attracted away from the 'true' faith because of the two creeds' resemblance, or seeing no reason to stop venerating Sol as salvation and forgiveness were also granted through the affiliated Mithras. Equally, the henotheism espoused by Sol's followers – the idea that he was the chief god of the universe but still only one of many deities – directly threatened the exclusivist monotheistic principle of

[84] Tert. *Spect.* VIII.1; Quinn Schofield W., 'Sol in the Circus Maximus' in *Hommages à Marcel Renard*, pp.639-49.

Christianity. The Roman Church would therefore have seen the continued presence of temples, shrines and *spelaea* to the god, or an associated deity, as either a threat to be destroyed or as an opportunity to be used to their own advantage. When we look at the topographical context of the original buildings of S. Lorenzo in Lucina and S. Pietro, there is good reason to think that the ecclesiastical authorities saw the pagan landscape as an opportunity, that is *using* pre-existing pagan centres as a means of persuading people that Christ was in fact Sol and that one should be worshipping the former. We see the same tactic being used with the Church adopting the festival to Sol as that for the birth of Christ.[85] Indeed, Constantine himself seems to have found it difficult to distinguish between the two, with S. Pietro being symbolic of that. With S. Prisca, S. Clemente and S. Lorenzo in Damaso we see a different policy at work, that of deliberate destruction. All these foundations were associated with Mithraea in their early lives, which were soon ritually destroyed. Indeed, there may have been more examples of such a pattern, but the attacks on Mithraea elsewhere may have been more thorough, so leaving us no trace of their existence. It is unclear whether these churches were deliberately placed here because of some prior knowledge that a Mithraeum existed nearby. If so, the Mithraeum's ritual demolition, followed by the construction of a church above or next to it, would have been of obvious symbolic significance to all. The danger this cult posed for Christianity would make such a policy not unlikely. However, the presumably high number of Mithraea in the city, combined with their invisibility from the outside and secretive nature, makes their appearance next to churches equally likely to be coincidental. Nevertheless, a violent relationship between the two centres ensued, ending with the inevitable destruction of Mithraea, although this may not always have been a quick process.

With our final two examples S. Marco & S. Anastasia, the juxtaposition with pagan centres almost literally on their doorstep may have had wider implications. That is, with their proximity to the potent *Ara Martis* and *Lupercal* respectively, we may have part of a policy that sought to integrate Christianity into ancient Roman tradition and thus a way of persuading those who were still pagans that the new faith was not a break with the past and everything they held dear, but rather merely the evolution of that history. This was the main stumbling block for the conversion of the Roman aristocracy, something the Church knew it needed to accomplish. So, for two very central Christian

[85] Degrassi, *Inscr.Ital* XIII.2.275. This approach seems to have provided only confusion - see n.53.

centres to be associated with two such important Roman monuments, that both intrinsically reflected Rome and its empire, would have been an important step towards placating the aristocracy.

Overall then, Christianity in Rome in the main seems to have sought to work alongside and with the pagan monuments of the city in order to use them for its own purpose of integrating the new faith into the life of the city and into the lives of its inhabitants. Only in the case of the subterranean and hidden Mithraea were violent methods used.

4. *Churches, Theatres and Circuses*: Religious and Entertainment Space

In this particular section of my thesis, I wish specifically to examine how religious and entertainment space interacted with each other in late antiquity, a time when the new phenomenon of 'Christian space' began to appear. Religious and entertainment space were the two most important and visited arenas for the typical inhabitant of Rome, and where he spent most of his time, outside the domestic sphere. I define entertainment space as a defined area where some sort of show was put on for the pleasure of the general population. Such areas would be a circus, stadium, theatre, or Odeon, where musical performances took place. In Rome, these spaces were generally confined to the Campus Martius sector of the city and to the Circus Maximus between the Palatine and Aventine hills. We will see how particular Christian, as well as pagan, structures had a relationship with such buildings. Paganism's close link with the games and the theatre is reflected in the proximity of many temples and shrines to entertainment buildings. We see a similar relationship between circuses, theatres and some early churches. It is the central place that entertainment buildings had in the everyday life of the people of the city that meant such a relationship was desirable. It ensured that both religions were at the heart of city life, something Christianity was particularly anxious to achieve. In this way, we will see how the placement of temples, and then churches in imitation, surrounded and fed off the entertainment space of the city to increase their own popularity, or to benefit their cult in some other way.

This chapter will begin with some background on the topic, that is the educated non-Christian and Christian attitudes to the games and theatre. Some comments on the endurance of such spectacles, and the nature of any competition there might have been between a church and a circus or theatre, will then follow. This will put the later discussion of the placement of specific religious buildings into context. An examination of those pagan and Christian centres where a relationship with an entertainment arena can be argued, will conclude this section.

4.1. Background

The background to this particular part of my work is necessarily the non-Christian and Christian attitudes to the theatre and the circus, which in turn implies these opinions may have influenced the building works. In brief I would say, with regard to Rome, the relationship between the two sorts of buildings was influenced more by the popularity of the entertainments and the elite necessity for self-promotion than such attitudes. Nevertheless, to know the opinions of the builders and customers for these structures can tell us much as to how any relationship between a religious and entertainment building was perceived at the time.

As with all 'opinions' from written sources in the ancient world, these are only the thoughts of a literate, educated, minority elite. So although their sentiments will be discussed, they will be compared to other evidence we have that shows us what the majority felt. As the building works we are looking at are usually for general public use, such opinion would have had more of an influence on building activity than those of a literate minority. The builders of these temples or churches were from a wealthy elite, but, in the Roman patronal system, they needed the support of the masses to retain their status.

I will not be describing non-Christian opinion as 'pagan' because their views were not influenced by their belief in the gods, such a conviction not having a strict universal moral code attached to it, as with Christianity, and because not all these writers would have been especially religious. In this way, a term such as 'non-Christian' is more appropriate for this group.

4.1.1. The Educated Non-Christian View of the Circus and the Theatre.

Throughout the ancient period, the consistent view of this section of society concerning the circus and the gladiatorial games is one of haughty disgust. All the writers complain about the unruly behaviour of the crowd, and the extreme violence or

excessive and disproportionate rivalry that encourages such conduct.[1] Such opinions continue into our period, but now to demonstrate the symptoms of the decline of the empire. One of these writers is Ammianus Marcellinus, who shows the continued and familiar distaste for the events and the apparent bewilderment as to their popularity.[2] Interestingly, he focuses on the chariot racing in the circus for his criticism, and does not mention the gladiatorial contests in his extant writings.

What is also consistent is the continued money and resources that this same group put into the production of these games. This seemingly hypocritical situation does however highlight two important points. The first is that such activities persisted in being very popular, and secondly, the political elite were still prepared to go to great expense and trouble in providing them for the populace. This latter point is amply demonstrated by the letters of the pagan senator Quintus Symmachus, who writes in 401 concerning the games for his son Memmius.[3] We also see the double standards here, when we read a letter Symmachus writes to the emperor that denounces such ostentation and this pandering to vulgar popular tastes.[4] This all indicates as well the social necessity of the games for this class, that is the need for popular support and approval. This in turn was an extension of the internal rivalry between the aristocracy for that popularity and public recognition, and a need to show off personal wealth.

Explicit references to the theatre by non-Christian writers are also frequent, but there is a mixed view put across as to the merits of what is shown there. Republican and early imperial elite opinion in general praises tragedy and some comedy but attacks the more popular bawdy and simplistic humour of mime or pantomime.[5] Again, this is the same section of society who builds the theatres in Rome and elsewhere.[6] During the second and third centuries a similar pattern of educated opinion emerges, although with less extant sources discussing it, a general mood amongst this group is more difficult to discern. There is no reason to think views had changed however.[7] By late antiquity, their views are less obvious because of far fewer surviving non-Christian voices from

[1] Eg. Cicero, *Ad Fam.*, 7.1; Seneca *Ep.*7.3, 83.7; *De Ira* 1.2.4-5, 1.17.4-7, 2.2.5; Juvenal 11.196-205; Dio 71.29.3-4.
[2] Amm. Marc., 14.6.25-6, 28.4.29-31.
[3] Eg. Symm. *Epist.* 2, 4 & 9 passim.
[4] Symm. *Rel.* 8.
[5] Eg. Against mimes-Cicero, *Ad Fam.*, 9.26; against pantomime- Tac. *Ann.*, 4.14; Juvenal, XI.162-70; Pliny, *Epist.*, 7.24.3-4; an aristocrat writing a tragedy- Cicero, *Ad* Fam., 10.32.3, Quintilian, *Inst. Orat.*, 10.1.98; a neutral view- Quintilian, *Inst. Orat.*, 11.3.73-4 &178-82.
[6] In Rome- the Theatres of Pompey (52BC), Balbus (13BC) and Marcellus (11BC).
[7] Lucian, *De Salt.*, 27; Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll. Tyana*, 5.91.

the fourth century. Any need by such authors to explicitly support traditional diversions in the face of a changing, more Christian, world is not apparent, after all, the circus races and gladiatorial combats were still supported by the Christian emperors until the fifth century, out of political and social necessity. Nevertheless, Claudian cannot hide his enthusiasm for the theatre, albeit writing for an aristocrat who would have seen it as an attractive avenue for popular approval.[8] Ammianus Marcellinus and Zosimus however echo the earlier tone. Ammianus clearly focuses on the mimes and the frivolities of the theatre for his ire, but with no qualification made for tragedy.[9] Perhaps such plays had fallen out of favour and were no longer shown. Zosimus only briefly mentions the theatre, but both times it is with disapproval.[10] Equally the emperor Julian was opposed to them, although in his case, perhaps as a reaction to the similar Christian criticism of them.[11]

It was not these attitudes that really affected *where* a temple was constructed in relation to a theatre or circus however, but rather the intimate connection that existed between traditional religion and the entertainments, as well as the latter's consistent popularity. It was this popularity that encouraged the creation of the permanent theatres, circuses and amphitheatres in the first place, by the politicians or emperors of the day, but the existence of pagan centres around these places was a by-product of the religious association between the gods and the games. With the theatre, this link originated from Greek tradition, which the Romans aped, which combined theatrical performances with Dionysiac and other pagan festivals. The gods and their myths were often central to many plays. The Romans themselves believed gladiatorial games began as a form of human sacrifice to the gods at the funerals of Etruscan nobles, and the chariot races had religious rites associated with them.[12] We will see in Rome how this relationship was cemented topographically.

4.1.2. The Educated Christian view of the Circus and the Theatre

As with opinion outside the Christian sphere, there seems to be a distinct divide between the minority educated Christian regard for the circus and the theatre and the

[8] Claudian, *Panegyricus de consulatu Flavii Manlii Theodori*, 323-30.
[9] Ammianus Marcellinus, XIV.6.18-20.
[10] Zosimus, II.3, 4.6.
[11] Julian, Frag. *Epist.*, 304C. (Beacham R.C., *The Roman Theatre and its Audience*, p.152 (n.138)).
[12] Ovid, *Amores*, III.2.

majority assessment. Again the written sources are from the former, and the latter can only be perceived by the continuing popularity of these entertainments throughout late antiquity, where growing popular Christian dislike would have noticeably affected attendance. This is especially true at Rome where a sizeable Christian population lived by the fourth century. We see no such decline, and indeed complaints by bishops in sermons of the deleterious effects the spectacles had on the size of their congregation, as well as laws that separated holy days and entertainment days, confirm a continued popularity for the games and theatre amongst the Christian population.

Minority Christian criticism of the circus and the theatre is as equally consistent as the non-Christian opposition, however the reasoning behind it is different, and this in turn affects the Christian perception and treatment of the buildings where such entertainment occurred, and the space around them. The elite Christian disagreement, which borders on hatred, rested on moral and religious grounds, educated non-Christians however criticised both forms of entertainment based on its poor quality and the disorder and violence it provoked. This difference means, whereas 'heathen' commentators disliked these diversions, and were perhaps saddened by the decrease in the importance of the religious elements, Christian authors perceived them as evil, and so, a direct insult to their God, as well as a challenge to church attendance.

For now we will focus on the nature of this educated Christian criticism. One of the most virulent attacks, and also one of the first, is by the north African Tertullian, writing in the late second to early third century. He explicitly describes the pagan religious links with the circus and the theatre, and describes the dangerous effects for the spectator from what one can see at these places, rather than the rights and wrongs of the 'entertainment' itself. These are the main arguments he uses, as does Lactantius about a hundred years later.[13] This focus on the effects for the onlooker is a repeat of the stoic argument that the non-Christian authors espouse.[14] The emphasis in these and other pre-Constantinian works is to stop Christians going to the theatre or circus, in order to save their souls. By describing the dangerous results of watching the spectacles, the intention seems to be to discourage them from attending events which were intimately connected with paganism and idolatry. Another likely reason for Christian

[13] Tert., *De Spect.* VIII, IX-XIII, XV; *Apol.* XV.4-6; Lactantius, *Div. Inst.* VI.20.9-14. See also Min. Felix, XXXVI.11-12 & Arnobius, *Adv. Nat.*, Appendix, for the further idea that these games and shows are in fact an insult to the gods. Also a rare view against the actual content of the spectacles- Clement of Alex., *Paed.*, 3.11.

[14] Wiedemann, T., *Emperors and Gladiators*, p.148.

writers' hatred of the games is that the entertainments were associated with the martyrdom of many Christians, especially after the widespread persecutions of the mid-third century. This explanation however, is strangely never mentioned in the sources. Christian dislike of the theatre, apart from its pagan roots, may also stem from the mockery that Christianity was subjected to in some of the plays. Gregory of Nazianzus speaks very explicitly about them, and some hagiographies refer to certain actors converting after simulating baptism for the stage for comedic purposes.[15]

After Constantine and the imperial acceptance and legalisation of Christianity, sentiments remain the same, but now the competition is not just for souls but for attendance in the newly established churches. This affects Christianity's relationship with the theatre and the circus, with the now formalised bishoprics and the imperially sanctioned religion itself competing with these rival attractions on Sundays and Holy days. In other words, the stakes have been raised and an extra dimension added to the debate, with any contest now having moved beyond the spiritual realm and into the economic one. That is, we now have a direct competition for audience between churches and entertainment areas, a factor which determined the popularity or 'success' of the building in question.

Evidence for the arguments against the spectacles in late antiquity comes from many sources, but I will focus on those from the West which are more relevant for my purposes. A good example is Augustine, writing in the early fifth century, who repeats the line taken by Minucius Felix and Arnobius, of puzzlement as to how the games could be 'religious', and adds that this in turn reflects badly on the gods themselves.[16] His views on the theatre also seem strikingly similar to those of the non-Christian writers. Nevertheless, he also reminds his readers that the content of the stage plays are generally pagan, and as such, dangerous to attend.[17] We see perhaps, as a reflection of this more peaceful age for Christians, a sense of frustration from Augustine at the continued obsession there is for such civic distractions. This is evident from his story of the refugees from Rome's sack in 410, who, after their escape, still spent most of their time in the theatres in Carthage. Salvian, writing in the 440s, displays similar dismay in

[15] Gregory Naz. *Orat.* II.84; *AA.SS.* Aug.V.122 and see Easterling P. & Hall E. (eds.), *Greek and Roman Actors*, p.307 & notes.
[16] Aug., *Civ. Dei.* II.8, II.12, II.27.
[17] Aug., *Civ. Dei.*, I.32, II.8, VI.5.

relation to the inhabitants of Trier, and repeats the story of Carthage.[18] The same author echoes Augustine's and earlier Christian authors' contention, especially that of Tertullian, that those attending these entertainments are as good as worshipping the gods.[19] Ambrose, bishop of Milan, writing in 386, describes how all the money still spent on putting on chariot-racing, theatrical shows and gladiatorial combats is a waste, and should be spent on charitable causes.[20] This more economic argument may indicate both new Christian concerns and the continuing aristocratic spending on such things. What it also may show is the wealth, and the potential misuse of that wealth, by the clergy of the period, as Ambrose's words are directed at them.

As we have observed, the written opinion and practical realities of entertainment for the masses diverge when the political stakes came into view. Politicians of whatever religious persuasion, by the fourth and fifth centuries, still needed popular approval and acceptance to justify their existence and enhance their social position. Providing entertainment, of whatever sort, was integral to achieving that aim. In exactly the same way, the fledgling Roman Church needed, perhaps more so, that popular approval, which manifested itself as regular good attendance in its churches. We will see how the topography ties in with this.

4.1.3. The Popularity of the Spectacles into Late Antiquity

All this criticism seems to have had little or no effect on the popularity of the games or theatre however, the only possible casualty being gladiatorial contests, and even this is highly debatable.[21] We would have expected Christian authors to have had some effect, as they were writing for instructive and moralising purposes to a wide

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[18] Aug., *Civ. Dei.* I.32; Salvian, *De Gub. Dei.* IV.5, VI.15. In the east, John Chrysostom speaks out against the games in the Hippodrome in Constantinople taking place so near to the Great Church, or Hagia Sophia, where he was preaching- Socrates, *HE* VI.18. It is unclear whether it was the immorality he saw in such events or their challenge to the attendance at the church that provoked this outburst.

[19] Salvian, *De Gub. Dei.* VI.11.

[20] Ambrose, *De Officiis Ministrorum,* 2.109; an earlier and similar 'pagan' opinion- Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* 66.

[21] They are not mentioned by many writers from the fourth century onwards, but *Cod. Theod.* XV.12.1-3 shows their continuation into the late fourth century at least. The last gladiatorial fights in Rome could have been in 404 however, stopped by Honorius (Theodoret, *HE.* V.26). They may have started again after his death though. Christians seem to have ignored or disregarded the pagan elements of the games and theatre – Novatian/Cyprian?, *De Spect.* I.3.

audience, and were often in positions of authority within the Church. For non-Christian authors it was all about class and status whether one enjoyed or went to these events, and their elite audience or readership would have felt the same. The continued popularity of the spectacles was due to popular taste and elite self-interest not high-brow opinion.

The consistently high popularity of the spectacles through the late Roman period can be proven through archaeology, the calendar, and the writings of the pagan and Christian elite. The latter evidence we have already examined briefly, with Christian writers' sustained attacks and criticism against them well into the fifth century proof enough of their continued popular attraction. The money and motive required for such events was increasingly lacking amongst the elites by this time however, due to economic decline and decreased local autonomy. In this way, Rome was one of the exceptions, with its continuing spectacles and an elite that could and still felt the need to put on entertainment for the masses. Needless to say, the demand still existed in places where the games and theatre did not.[22] In Rome the archaeology can demonstrate this continued demand, and can be seen with the evidence from masonry and inscriptions. These show the restoration of the Theatre of Pompey throughout the fifth century and into the sixth, and the continued use of the Theatre of Marcellus into the fifth century.[23] Furthermore the 'Colosseum' was repaired many times in the fifth century and under Theodoric in the early sixth, and the Circus Maximus continued to be in use during the sixth century.[24] The Odeum of Domitian, that staged musical contests, was still intact, and presumably in use, in the fifth century. However, his Stadium, also in the Campus Martius, disappears from the record after the fourth century. This was where athletic contests took place, and its earlier demise may be a reflection of a decline in interest for these competitions by this period.[25]

The festival calendar also shows how important the entertainments still were into the fourth century, with a hundred and seventy-five days given over to them.[26] The letters of Symmachus, as we have seen, show how willing the aristocracy still was to go

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[22] Salvian, *De Gub. Dei.* VI.39-45.

[23] Theatre of Pompey- By Arcadius and Honorius, (*CIL* VI.1191) and Avianus Symmachus under Theodoric between 507-11, (Cassiodorus, *Var.* IV.51.3-4). Theatre of Marcellus- statues put up in it in 421 (*CIL* VI.1660).

[24] 'Colosseum'- for example repaired in 438 (*CIL* VI.32086-87), 470 (*CIL* VI.32091-2, 32188-89) and probably in 508 (*CIL* VI.32094). Beast hunts and fights were held there in 523 (Cassiodorus, *Var.* V.42).

[25] Both existing in mid-fourth century- Amm. Marc. XVI.10.14; *Not./Cur.*IX. – Nordh, p.87.9-10; but no Stadium in fifth – Pol. Silv. *Quae sint Romae* (Val. & Zucc., I.310).

[26] Calendar of 354- Degrassi A., *Inscr. It.* XIII.2, *Fasti Furii Filocali*, pp.239-261.

to great trouble and expense to put on such shows.[27] The writings of Cassiodorus under Theodoric also indicate that the entertainments continued with vigour into the sixth century in Rome.[28]

4.1.4. Why They Continued

All this reiterates how important the games and shows were, and still were, to the aristocracy, the emperor, and even later 'barbarian' kings who themselves realised the need for this type of display in the Roman system they had inherited. Christian opposition could not change this fact, and Christian emperors soon turned a deaf ear to the criticisms heard in the pulpits.[29] Their reasoning, and that of many aristocrats until the sixth century, was one of a continuing need for public approval and acknowledgement for their achievements as the major part of attaining the legitimacy they required to justify their position amongst their peers or on the imperial throne. This was all part of the continuing patron-client system of interdependence, and both pagan and Christian leading figures of the time still needed to gain this approval, albeit achieving it via different means.[30]

Another reason the games continued, in the circus at least, was that this was the only chance for the general populace to voice their opinion, positive or negative, to the emperor and those around him. Simply, especially in times of instability, this unspoken right could not have been removed without serious popular protest. Violent riots in the cities of the empire, and especially in Rome, were known to flare up for far less. Equally, the popularity of the entertainments themselves and their content, which we have just examined, is ample reason in itself for them to continue. The fact that the games were amongst the last surviving Roman institutions in the West should tell us everything.

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[27] See n.3.
[28] Cassiodorus, *Var.* I.20, IV.51, VII.10.
[29] An excellent account of these emperors continuing with the circus games can be found in Curran J.R., *Pagan City and Christian Capital*, pp.218-259.
[30] Harries J., 'Favor populi: pagans, Christians and public entertainment in late Antique Italy', in Lomas K. & Cornell T. (eds), *Bread and Circuses*, pp.125-141 esp.125-6 & 135.

4.1.5. Competition Between the Church and the Circus and Theatre

A temple and a circus or theatre were closely associated, and often worked together for each others own benefit. As we have seen, the games and scenic plays had strong pagan overtones, and often the buildings where they took place had temples or shrines physically within their boundaries. As such, they constitute quasi-pagan spaces in themselves. In other words, the competition for space or audience between these two buildings, the two factors we are looking at, are not a factor here. Precise examples of this close inter-relationship will be discussed later, suffice to say for now a mutual association is self-evident.

At this time therefore, it will be enough to examine a more ambiguous and less straightforward relationship, that is the one between the early churches of Rome and the still active buildings of entertainment. Do we have a situation where there is competition, a relationship of mutual benefit, or a mixture of the two between the two structures?[31] And also, what is the focus for this relationship, that is, what are they competing for, or working together to use for their mutual advantage? For my part, 'audience' seems to be the main overriding factor in this question. In all this we must recognise the different religious criteria on which Christianity based itself in comparison to the over-arching worship of the gods. Christian worship was a private religion, more akin to the mystery cults that had increasingly attracted many worshippers alongside the 'traditional' deities and cults. These mystery religions involved an initiation rite, secret knowledge held only once the initiate had achieved a certain rank within it, and most importantly for our purposes, worship in the private sphere away from the public gaze.

We see this last aspect in Christianity with the idea of the 'house of God' where worship took place, separate from the secular and the mundane. This manifested itself initially in Rome with the *domus ecclesia*, and then from the fourth century the basilical 'church'. The basilica was a building that had a long history in Rome being originally of Greek origin, and was essentially a rectangular assembly hall with a semi-circular niche in one of the short sides. It is no coincidence Christians used this form of building to

[31] Lim (Lim R., 'People as Power: Games, Munificence and Contested Topography' in Harris W.V. (ed.), *The Transformations of Urbs Roma in Late Antiquity*, pp.265-81) sees this relationship as a competitive one, but overstates the newly secular nature of the games and theatre in late antiquity I believe. Pagan 'activity' may have become a thing of the past at the shows, but the shrines, temples and statues were still there.

adapt for their 'house of God', it already being recognised as an enclosed meeting-place or centre of assembly, two elements fundamental to Christian worship. Christianity required 'attendance', whereas paganism only needed observance from its followers, which was often in public areas. Attendance requires a delineated space to 'attend', and this whole concept may have arisen due to the necessity or desire to separate Christian worship from the 'pagan' world outside, the impure and sinful world against which Christianity preached. Christians then sought to separate themselves from that world, but with the advent of imperial patronage for their religion from the early fourth century, this became less necessary and desirable. This, we will see, becomes apparent in the positioning of churches in Rome, and is crucial in understanding the nature of the relationship between the church and public space, in this case where games and theatrical shows took place.

The 'church' then, by definition, separated Christianity from the public sphere in a way the majority of pagan cults were not, and in contrast to the arenas for entertainment which were public, as well as virtual pagan spaces. We have already discussed the Christian imperial embrace of the entertainments, but we naturally assume the ecclesiastical authorities followed the line seen in the Christian commentators, of avoiding such buildings and the events that took place within them. As we will see, this official stance espoused by the polemical writers may not have been always reflected in the early Christian topography of Rome. Christian builders seem to have been rather more pragmatic.

In essence then, the relationship between the church and the building of public entertainment was inevitably one of competition for audience. Was this a relationship where there was an aggressive intention to try and persuade one audience away from the other? It seems a not unlikely scenario considering the vitriolic denunciations we get from Christian clerics complaining of their flock going to these events instead of church. For example, Pope Leo I rails against the attractions of the circus for taking his congregation away, in a sermon of 440.[32] One can imagine the power such a sermon would have had from a church very near or next to an entertainment arena.

A story from Arles in the 430s further demonstrates the tension between the two sorts of building. It is the account of how bishop Hilary cured a man who hurt himself while plundering a theatre of its marble, in order to embellish a church. Whether this

[32] Leo, *Sermo* LXXXIV; see also Salvian, *De Gubernatione Dei,* VI.36-8.

man deliberately chose the theatre to rob is a moot point, it could just have been the nearest building available to pillage, which could be significant in itself of course. More important is the reaction of the bishop and the author Cassian to this act. Both applauded it and saw it as a work of faith rather than vandalism, and use the story to contrast the luxurious theatre with the holy church.[33] Possible evidence for this sort of behaviour in Rome can be seen in an official letter sent by the Prefect of the City, Symmachus, to the Emperors in 384. In it he records the reply by the prefect after accusations were made against him referring to the maltreatment of Christians. This allegation surfaced, because of a recent crackdown on the removal of objects and treasure from public buildings, notably temples, for private use.[34] The fact that such spoliation could be connected with Christians, suggests there may have been some precedent for this.[35] Further, their re-use for 'private' purposes could mean houses and gardens, but also churches, which were regarded as private property.

This aggressive attitude to the circus and theatre begins to seem one of outward appearances belying more pragmatic realities and actions, however, when we examine the legal evidence. The various laws of the fourth and fifth centuries seem, in contrast to the impassioned writings against the civic entertainments, to be a compromise and an admission of defeat in a sense. These laws, beginning in 392, try and separate the entertainments from days that the Christian congregation should be at church. They begin with a ban on events in the circus on Sundays, then to all spectacles on a Sunday, which is repeated in 399. This is followed by a ban on spectacles during most of the main Christian holidays, and then a reiteration of the Sunday ban, to be enforced even if imperial anniversaries fall on them. A final law repeats the ban on Holy days, which are now to include Pentecost.[36] This pattern of reiteration and gradual widening of the ban on the games and theatrical events, to eventually cover the vast majority of days where church attendance was required, is a clear indication of the need by the Church authorities to separate the entertainments from church activities. This is a battle the ecclesiastical authorities knew it could not win, so compromise was required in order to fill the churches on Sundays and other Holy days.

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[33] A man named Cyrillus "*...fidei opere nudans loca luxuria, quod sacrum parabat ornatibus...*" (Cassian, *In S. Hilarium Arelatensem Episcopum Prolegomena*, ch. XV (*PL.* 50, p.1235) from Ward-Perkins B., *From Classical Antiquity*, pp.92-3).

[34] Symmachus, *Rel.* 3.1? (n.2, p.35, Barrow R.H., *Prefect and Emperor*), 21.

[35] Zosimus,V.38.2 records such an event in the late fourth-century.

[36] *Cod. Theod.* II.8.23-25, XV.5.2, 5.

This frustrated resignation, or genuine realisation that the games and theatre should be embraced and changed from within, may be evident in the best two examples of churches that fit the proximity criterion. These will be examined and discussed later, but we may have a situation where it is equally likely that a church was a tool to assimilate the two arenas, rather than to confront them. Suffice it to say for now that the basis of the relationship between the two 'spaces' appears to be one that centres on 'audience', and the need for the church to have a sufficient one. There is no evidence to say which way this was achieved. That is, the church may have fed off the nearby circus or theatre, as the church for the theatre-goers or charioteers to go to after or before the performance or race.[37] Equally, the church could have been situated next to these buildings to remind or actively persuade their Christian attendees to go to mass instead.

The legal evidence, however, seems to indicate that the theatrical shows and circus events continued to be more of a draw than what the Church had to offer. Essentially, the crux of the question is whether a church was trying to feed off the obvious popularity of the entertainments for its own benefit, or to challenge that popularity for the same reason. Whatever the case, the positioning of the churches I will now describe are compelling, and do beg for some explanation. With the complete absence of any surviving discussion of this issue though, the answer can never be definitive.

4.2. Case Studies

We are focusing on entertainment space in this chapter, and the basis of the argument proposed relies on the significance of proximity, in this case with religious buildings and centres of entertainment in Rome. It seems clear that historical tradition and the need for consistently good attendance are the reasons pagan and Christian centres respectively, were situated next to circuses and theatres. It is this concept of proximity that will be the focus for any claims of an 'association' between these two sorts of buildings. Any theory about visual relationships – that is one structure being easily visible from another, so linking the two in the mind of the viewer – are often impossible to prove with the evidence we have, so physical or 'actual' distance will be

[37] See Cameron A., *Circus Factions*, p.152.

the primary criterion we will use here. I define proximity as two buildings no more than 150 metres apart.

4.2.1. The Pagan Topography

To provide the proper context in which to discuss the Christian topography later, and to more deeply examine the interaction between 'paganism' and the entertainment space of late antique Rome, we will discuss the temples and pagan shrines of the city in this context first. With the circus and theatre, this interaction is very obvious topographically, and is a result of the known evolution of the various games and theatre activities from pagan religious tradition. Further, 'paganism' was not an exclusivist religion like Christianity, and was rooted in the public sphere. All this indicates that the temple and the circus or theatre would have had a harmonious and interdependent relationship.

Circuses

We can begin by looking at the relationship between the circuses and temples of the city. The pagan religious buildings would have been landmarks in the city, as the Christian administration would have recognised, and would have served as a comparison to their own foundations and where they were situated. A major feature of the city were the pagan shrines and temples that were prominent around the circuses. The two which were still in use in the fourth century were the *Circus Maximus* and *Flaminius*, the latter being more an open space than a distinct structure, but its purpose was the same.

The *Circus Maximus* was the oldest example, and had existed in non-monumental form back to the time of the kings. The flat valley of land between the Aventine and Palatine hills was used for horse racing from very early times. The area was first formalised and monumentalised by Julius Caesar, temporary wooden seating being the practice before this. The original Caesarian structure was embellished and added to over the centuries, the last example of this being the installation of an Egyptian obelisk on the *spina* by Constantius II in 357.[38] **(see Fig.2e)** A tradition of the site was

[38] *LTUR*. I.272-7; for the Constantian obelisk see Amm. Marc. XVI.10.17 & XVII.4.12-15.

the many shrines to the gods around the edge of the track, which were then incorporated into Caesar's permanent structure. They were possibly victory monuments in thanks to a particular god or goddess for success, but developed into permanent religious places.

The majority of the great number of shrines and temples were either on the *spina* or around the edge of the seating in the *Circus Maximus*. Many were minor deities but all added to the undoubted religious atmosphere of the place, a fact that cannot have been lost on the spectators, especially Christian ones perhaps. One of our main sources for all the temples and shrines here is Tertullian after all. This is hardly someone with the same views of the circus games as the average Christian, but he does show us how prominent these structures were in his day, the late second and early third century. He also makes it clear how the gods were integral to the all the activities there at that time. Even allowing for some exaggeration on Tertullian's part, the gods were clearly very much central to the races at the circus. How long this element took to fade from the fourth century we cannot say, but the continued Christian ire directed at the circus events, imply it was a slow process. The physical landscape of the *Circus Maximus*, and other arenas, no doubt contributed to this persistent animosity. We will look briefly at each of the temple/shrines in the *Circus Maximus* in turn, as the priority here is not their precise history and meaning, but rather their close relationship with the circus and the events that took place there.

The first of these is the Temple of *Iuventus*, completed in 191 BC and restored under Augustus.[39] Its name suggests it had something to do with the coming of age of boys, but more importantly it is described as *in circo maximo* by Livy, and Pliny describes it as close to a temple to *Summanus*.[40] This temple was built in the early third century BC during the war with Pyrrhus.[41] If we believe that the entry *aedem Ditis patris*, in the Notitia under region XI, is the temple in question, then if it is not within the circus it must be on its Aventine side, which means the Temple to *Iuventus* must also be.[42] The term *in circo maximo* may just be a reference to the area rather than the circus itself, but the implication of close proximity is clear. Another example is that of *Sol et Luna*, which, judging by Tertullian, may have been the largest and most important temple in the Circus.[43] He describes it as in the middle of the arena, but it is unclear

[39] Livy, XXXVI.36; Cass. Dio. LIV.19.7; *Res Gestae*. 19.
[40] Pliny, *NH*. XXIX.57.
[41] Ovid, *Fast*. VI.731-2.
[42] *LTUR*. IV.385-6, III.163; *Not*. XI. – Nordh, p.91.9.
[43] Tert. *De Spect*. VIII.

whether Tertullian ever saw the Circus in Rome, and it is shown to be on the *cavea* in coins of Trajan and Caracalla. It may have been situated on the south-west corner of the circus.[44] **(Fig.4a)** As such, it probably predates any permanent seating and is therefore ancient. A temple to Mercury was also located on the Aventine side, facing the Circus. It appears in region XI in the fourth century regionary lists, which confirms its proximity. It is also described as behind the turning point in the south-east of the Circus, that is on the *spina*, by Apuleius. It dates from 495 BC.[45] Tertullian also describes how a statue to *Magna Mater*, or the Great Mother, stood on the *spina*, and on coins and representations of circuses a large statue to her can be seen there. **(Fig.4b)** The structure next to it could be the shrine to her that is mentioned in the regionary lists.[46] Another example is a temple to Venus *Obsequens*, described as *ad circum Maximum* by Livy. His description suggests it was just to the rear of the seating at the south-east point of the Circus, as he talks about a road between it and the Forum Boarium, which lies beyond the *Carceres*.[47] In this area there has also been found a Mithraeum, only separated from the circus by a narrow street. It was built into a second century building some time in the latter half of the third century.[48]

Further examples of religious imagery are described by Tertullian, and more shrines and temples were no doubt situated in and around the circus. **(Fig.4c & see Fig.2e)** What we have described though will suffice to show the intimacy that existed between the pagan cults and this circus. Four of these temples or shrines appear in the fourth-century *Notitia* and *Curiosum*, and so certainly survived at that time.[49] There is no reason to think most, if not all, the other temples and shrines did not survive up to this period and beyond, as a sixth century description suggests.[50] Consequently, this building must have been the focus for imperial and aristocratic patronage throughout late antiquity.

The other major circus in Rome that was still used in late antiquity was the *Circus Flaminius*. As has been said, this was more of an open square than an enclosed

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[44] *LTUR.* IV.333-4; *RIC.*II.284 n.571, IV.I.295 n.500.
[45] Livy, II.21.7; Ovid, *Fast.* V.669; Apul. *Met.*6.8; *Not./Cur.*XI.- Nordh, p.91.8, 4.
[46] Tert. *De Spect.* VIII.; *BM Cat. Coins*, Mattingly H. (ed.) III. 180 s. nn. 833-56, t. 32.2, II. 346 n. 239, t. 67.6 (*LTUR.*III.232-3); *Not./Cur.*XI. – Nordh, p.91.5.
[47] Livy, X.31.9, XXIX.37.2; *LTUR.* V.118 for other possible locations; Tert. *op cit.*
[48] Pietrangeli C., 'Il mitreo del palazzo dei Musei di Roma', *BCAR* 68 (1940), pp.143-73.
[49] A fifth appears in these lists as *...Iobis* (sic) and *...Iovis arboratoris*: *Not./Cur.*XI. – Nordh, p.91.5. This shrine may also lie within the Circus, perhaps also on the *Spina*. (Hülsen C. in Jordan H., *Topographie*, 1.3, p.141).
[50] Cassiod. *Var.*3.51.

arena, so it did not have temples or shrines built into it as such.[51] It did however have many situated around its edge, and these were connected to the activities that took place in the circus itself. The Circus was situated in the southern Campus Martius with the Tiber not far to the south, and was bordered on the east by the Theatre of Marcellus. It was created by C. Flaminius when he was censor in 221 BC.[52] To its north lay two porticoes, the first was finished by Augustus' sister Octavia soon after 23 BC – replacing one of Q. Metellus completed roughly 120 years earlier – the second was built by L. Marcius Philippus, which he constructed around the Temple of Hercules *Musarum*, which he had just restored.[53] **(Fig.4d)** Within the *Porticus Octaviae* were the temples of *Iuppiter Stator* and *Iuno Regina*, the first described by Macrobius the second by Livy, as in the Circus Flaminius. Livy also describes a Temple of Diana here also, although we have no clue as to the precise location of this.[54] With porticoes being created around these temples, it visibly disconnected them from the circus, yet both these porticoes were almost certainly open onto the square.

The term *in circo Flaminio* soon became more an area than place designation, but whatever the case the Circus and these temples had an historical and visible connection. The same can be said of the temple to *Hercules Custos* on the western edge of the circus, which is attributed to Sulla but seems to have been a restoration of a much older structure.[55] **(Fig.4e)** The date of its dedication, the 4th June, is recorded as having *ludi in Minucia* in a fourth century calendar. Why these games did not take place in the Circus is a mystery, perhaps it was in a ruined state by that time.[56] Games had been celebrated in the Circus for many centuries, but this revelation implies this practice did not continue into late antiquity, although we cannot be certain. The same uncertainty

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[51] Its unusual form and exact location is known through a precise join in a section of the Severan plan of the city showing the area (Gatti, G.'Dove erano situati il Teatro di Balbo e il Circo Flaminio?' in *Capitolium* 35.7 (1960), pp. 3-12; Rodríguez-Almeida, E., *Forma Urbis Marmorea*, fg.31 (hereafter *FUM*).

[52] Livy, *Epit.* 20.

[53] *FUM*, fg.31; *Octaviae*-Vell.Pat. I.11.3-5; Suet. *Aug.29.4.* Octavia also rebuilt the temples it surrounded (Pliny, *NH.*36.42) Two other similarly named porticoes are thought to be in this area, only one of these is certain, built by Cn. Octavius (Pliny, *NH.* 34.13, Vell Pat. II.1.2); *Philippi*-Suet. *Aug.*29.5; Mart.*Ep.*49.12-13. As such, debate as to the names of these porticoes continues. A temple to Hercules *Musarum* had existed on the site from 189/187BC (Cicero, *Pro Arch.* 27).

[54] Macro.*Sat.*3.4.2; Livy, 40.52.1. *Iuppiter Stator* dates to soon after the laying out of the Circus and *Iuno Regina* to 187 BC (Livy, 39.2.11); *LTUR.*III.126-8, 157-9, II.14.

[55] Ovid, *Fast.* 6.199-208 with 209-12 places it 'on the other side of the circus' to the Temple of Bellona thought to be behind the Theatre of Marcellus; Livy, 21.62.9, 38.35.4 does not specify this temple however.

[56] Calendar of 354, 4th June in A. Degrassi, *Inscr. It.* XIII.2, *Fasti Furii Filocali* , p. 249; Manacorda & Zanini 'The First Millennium AD in Rome: from the *Porticus Minucia* to the via delle Botteghe Oscure' in *Anal. Rom. Inst. Dan-* Suppl. 16 (1989), p.29.

exists for the other public functions it had been used for.[57] In spite of this, it was still a distinguishable public area, in the fourth century at least, with *Circus Flaminius* still being given as the name of the area in the regionary lists. The further line of temples believed to have been on the south-west side of the square, including that of Castor and Pollux and Neptune, again emphasises the long-standing religiosity of the Circus.[58] **(see Figs. 4e & f)** The city's inhabitants in late antiquity would have certainly been aware of this enduring religiosity simply because of the number of temples that surrounded it.

Both these circuses had temples and shrines connected with them from their creation. The temples and shrines we have discussed were all first created soon *after* the first use of their respective sites as circuses, so their establishment was based on the existence of that circus. Such an historical and spatial relationship would not have been lost on the Christian builders from the fourth century. The circus and paganism were thus inseparable ceremonially and topographically due to the events that took place in them.

Theatres

The theatres of ancient Rome seem also to have had a similar relationship with the gods for the same reason. The Theatres of Pompey, Marcellus and Balbus all survived into the fourth century, that of Pompey at least still being used in the sixth.[59] This was another form of entertainment the Christian writers criticised, but more for the content of the shows than the implicit pagan presence there. The exception to this is Tertullian with regards the Theatre of Pompey, where such a pagan presence could not be avoided. This was the first stone theatre in Rome and the first permanent one, built by Pompey and completed in 52 BC at the time of his third consulship. It was situated between the latterly built Theatre of Balbus to the south and Baths of Agrippa to the north in the southern part of the Campus Martius.[60] **(see Fig.4e (ii))** It was restored

[57] Val.Max.I.7.4; Varro, *Rust.* V.154; Livy, XL.52.4, XXXIX.5; Cicero, *Ad Att.* I.14.1.*LTUR.* I.269-70.
[58] Vitruvius. *De Arch* .IV.8.4. The Temple of Castor and Pollux's location is based on a reconstruction using a new marble plan of the area and the Severan plan together, where it is between the Tiber and the Circus. The Temple of Neptune however, could have been near the Temple to Hercules *Custos*, to the north-west of the circus. Usually its location is based on that of Castor & Pollux's though, and its obvious association with water, so it is thought to be next to the Tiber. (*LTUR.*I.245-6, fig.139, III.341-2).
[59] *Not./Cur.*IX. – Nordh, p.87.3-8; Cassiod. *Var.* IV.51.
[60] Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.20; Dio, XXXIX.38.1-6; Gellius, 10.1.7-9; *FUM* fg.39.

frequently up to the sixth century, and so was in use for at least five hundred and fifty years. What was unusual about it was the existence of a temple in the centre of the seating, a feature, as we have seen, not out of place in a circus. **(Fig.4g)** Being the first permanent Roman example, what made this more unusual was that it was not repeated in any other Roman theatres, including the two other late antique survivals in Rome. This temple was dedicated to *Venus Victrix* and seems to have been intact as long as the theatre was.[61] Tertullian explains its existence here by saying Pompey did it to avoid censure from the conservative senators for building a permanent theatre. By placing a temple in his theatre he could then describe it as a temple enclosure, with the seats simply as stairs leading up to it.[62] This unlikely story was believed by Tertullian because it fitted his argument for the theatre as a pagan place. Whether the temple was used or not from the fourth century, it was still a constant reminder to the spectators of a pagan presence. Further reminders were the existence of other shrines or temples around the top of Pompey's theatre, of which there seem to have been four, to Honour, Virtue, Felicity and possibly Victory.[63]

The Theatre of Marcellus was begun by Julius Caesar, but was not dedicated until 13 or 11 BC by Augustus. It still seems to have been in use in the fifth century.[64] It lay between the *Circus Flaminius* and the Capitoline hill, next to the Tiber. The unusual design of the stage and its surroundings, as shown on the marble plan, has suggested to some that the theatre was used mainly for games and spectacles rather than plays. Nevertheless, there is evidence here as well for pagan features being integral to the structure. The idea that the two square features behind the stage could not be temples, because of the proximity of others nearby, is not convincing.[65] **(Fig.4h & see 4e (i))** The smaller square in front of them implies an altar, and temples dedicated and used within a building of public entertainment were not unusual, as we have seen. The number of temples in the area should not dissuade us from the likelihood that this is the case here. Indeed, Caesar is said to have destroyed many temples and statues to build in this area.

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[61] *CIL* VI. 785 mentions the temple and was found in situ. There is evidence that may suggest, from as early as the second century possibly, that the temple no longer existed. However the dating and reliability of this evidence is questionable (Pseudo Acro/Porphyry?,*Schol. In Hor., Serm.*1.2.94).
[62] Tert. *De Spect.* X.
[63] Suet. *Claud.* 21.1; *Fasti Allifani & Fasti Amiternini*, 12 August, in Degrassi A., *Inscr. It.* XIII.2, *Fasti Anni Numani et Iuliani*, pp. 181, 191.
[64] *Res Gestae.*21; Dio, XLIII.49.2, LIV.26.1; Pliny, *NH.* 8.65; *CIL* VI. 1660; Pol. Silv., *Quae sint Romae* (Val & Zucc. I.309).
[65] *LTUR.* V. 34-5; *FUM,* fg.31.

These two features could have been the propitiating gestures.[66] The temples that remained around the theatre all, naturally, predated it, so any deliberate association between the two cannot be argued. None were built *ex novo* in the area after the theatre's construction.[67] Yet Caesar seems to have been determined to site his theatre on this spot. His reasoning may have been more political though. Nonetheless, for the late antique observer, a theatre surrounded by temples to the north and east, and flanked on the west by the *Circus Flaminius*, the relationships would have seemed obvious.

For the Theatre of Balbus however, we have no evidence for such visible religious accessories. It was dedicated in 13BC and built by L. Balbus (II), a Spaniard, following a victory in North Africa six years earlier.[68] The *Crypta Balbi* is more interesting however. It was effectively a portico, with the same intimate connection with Balbus' theatre as that of the *Porticus Pompeii* with Pompey's, and is believed to have been built at the same time as the theatre as a result. The only known evidence for its existence is from the regionary catalogues of the fourth century, which confirm the continued survival of the theatre as well, into late antiquity.[69] Recent excavations of the *Crypta Balbi* to the south of the small *exedrae* protruding from its eastern wall, as well as a mark on the marble plan drawn in the centre of it, indicates one if not two religious centres within or around it. The most significant of these has been argued to have existed in the central court of this presumed cryptoporticus. A small straight line on the marble plan suggests a building in the middle of the portico, which may be a temple, its date commensurate with the crypt's construction because of its central position.[70] **(Fig.4i)** Also, excavations by the eastern edge of this structure near the semi-circular *exedrae*, shown on the marble plan, have recently found remains of a Mithraeum that dates from the late second century to the late fourth. It was demolished and filled with rubble in the mid-fifth century.[71] **(Fig.4j)** This revelation is perhaps less important for

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[66] Dio, XLIII.49.3; *FUM*, frgs.31q-s with Rodríguez-Almeida E., 'Diversi problemi connessi con la lastra n.37 della *Forma Urbis Marmorea* e con la topografia *in circo* e *in campo*' in *RendPontAcc.* 64 (1991-2), p.17.

[67] For example, the Temple of Apollo *Medicus* (*Sosianus*), just to the north, was completed in 431 BC (Livy, 4.29.7). The fact it was dedicated by a possible ancestor of Caesar's may have been significant in its survival and the positioning of the theatre. For the temples on the eastern flank of the theatre see *LTUR.* III.90-1, 128-9, IV. 336-7.

[68] Suet. *Aug.*29.5; Dio. LIV.25.1-2.

[69] *Not./Cur.*IX. – Nordh, p.87.1

[70] *FUM*, frgs. 30a-c esp. 30b; *LTUR.* I.327; Rodríguez-Almeida E., 'Diversi problemi' in *RendPontAcc* 64 (1991-2), pp.16-20.

[71] *FUM*, frg. 30a; *Museo Nazionale Romano Crypta Balbi-* Visitor pamphlet. Excavation reports are as yet unpublished.

our purposes, as the Mithraeum was hidden and inconspicuous, in fact built into the ground floor of an apartment block. Its proximity to a portico associated with a theatre then may have no significance whatsoever, especially if such Mithraea were particularly numerous. Similarly, Mithraism, a Persian cult, had no traditional connection to the theatrical shows.

A possible temple in the middle of the *Crypta Balbi* however, would be very significant, as this is where the audience at the theatre would have come between and after performances. This was also no doubt a general public area, as the Portico of Pompey was, and an implicit connection between the temple and the theatre, which were in clear view of each other, would have been made. This pagan atmosphere was added to by the performances themselves, where the gods were very much a part of the plays that were shown, as well as being central to the historical background of the shows, as we have described.[72] It is enough for our purposes though, that the existence of theatres with temples and shrines in and around them was an obvious topographical feature of Rome in late antiquity. Again, this would have been appreciated by the Christian authorities at that time.

4.2.2. The Christian Topography **(see Fig.1a)**

In comparison to many temples and entertainment buildings, most churches were not as obviously associated. However, with a few of the new Christian basilicas of the fourth and fifth centuries, there is some justification in thinking that there was some form of relationship, although it took a different form from that seen with pagan centres. The intimate connection between the games, the theatre and the pagan cults almost necessitates the existence of temples or shrines in and around the buildings where they took place. Perhaps because of this connection, and the 'official' distaste for their content, the Christian impact in these areas was minimal and unlikely.

Circuses

Two notable exceptions to this rule were founded within the pontificate of Damasus (366-384). It is with this bishop that we have evidence for a personal, perhaps

[72] Tert. *De Spect., op cit*; Augustine, *Civ. Dei.* II.8, 12.

surprising, link between a leading Christian official and the circus games. It is the nature of Damasus' rise to power, coupled with the positioning of two of his foundations, S.Lorenzo in Damaso and S.Anastasia, that brings us to this conclusion. This link is not one of opposition it seems, but rather co-operation or even acceptance of those events, albeit perhaps reluctantly.

The first clue to this relationship can be found in a document written to the emperor about the dispute surrounding the election of the pope in 366, between Damasus and his rival Ursinus.[73] It is clearly pro-Ursinian in its description of Damasus, but at the same time we cannot dismiss all that is says, in spite of some undoubted exaggeration on the part of the writer. It reports that Damasus, *cum perfidis*, employed men from the arena, chariot racers, as well as workmen, all armed with swords and clubs, to take the church that Ursinus and his supporters held in Rome.[74] This need not be untrue; indeed it is likely that Ursinus employed similar people, somewhat of a Roman tradition in times of conflict in the city. What is more important from our point of view is the possible link between Damasus and those chariot racers, and men from the arena. It shows that he relied heavily on these people during the time of the disputed election, and had them to thank in effect for his eventual acceptance and official approval as bishop of Rome. Because of this controversial rise to power he also needed to gain the goodwill and approval of the Christians of the city. We can see such motivations, I believe, behind the two foundations.

The first of these is S. Lorenzo in Damaso, the dating and founding of which is confirmed by the presence, in the signatures from the synods at Rome in 499 and 595, of presbyters of the *titulus Damasi*. Also, the *Liber Pontificalis* says Damasus founded a basilica to St. Lawrence close to the theatre. The remains of Pompey's are only a hundred and fifty metres or so to the south-east of the current church, which, as we have seen, were imbued with pagan imagery. A detailed list of the gifts presented to the church by Damasus makes the claim by the *LP* more reliable, and confirms his position as the official founder of the first formal Christian structure here.[75] The modern church

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[73] *Coll. Avell.*, I.

[74] Ibid., I.7. For the idea that there was a political dimension to this, and other similar papal conflicts, see Cracco Ruggini L., 'Spazi urbani clientelari e caritativi' in *La Rome Impériale: Démographie et logistique*, 157-91 & Cracco Ruggini L., 'Rome in Late Antiquity: Clientship, Urban Topography, and Prosopography' in *Classical Philology* 98 (2003), 373-80.

[75] *MGH.AA.* XII.411; *MGH.Ep.* I.367; *LP* I. 212-3.

is situated a few metres north of the ancient basilica, in what would have been region nine, between the Theatre of Pompey and the Stadium of Domitian.[76]

The church was also known as *in Prasino*, after the stables or club house of the circus Green faction, which was nearby.[77] **(Fig.4k)** These stables were just to the south of the ancient church, so Damasus' use of *quadrigarii* during the battles over his election may be connected. It is true, judging from further inscriptions found in the church, that either Damasus or his father had become a priest here, and Damasus was either 'parish priest' of the church or was living there before he became bishop.[78] This suggests that there was already some sort of Christian structure in place before Damasus' pontificate, perhaps just a hall or converted house, in this proximity to the stables. Its existence here was probably no more than coincidence therefore, but the decision to enlarge, decorate or newly build a church here, and one which had an extension for the Church's archives , does seem significant.[79]

Whether Damasus used the chariot racers because a group of them were so close to his home/'church', or their success in fighting off the Ursinian supporters led him to create or enlarge the building in tribute to them, we cannot say for sure. What is also certainly possible is that after the struggle for the bishopric of Rome, in which churches became centres of power and foci for personal support, Damasus would have wanted to build or embellish a church that was very near a group that had supported him.[80] This would have provided him with a base of power in case of future disputes. Also, the Greens were the main circus faction, and a favourite of many emperors.[81] Damasus then may have been well aware that to be associated with the most prestigious and largest team in such a popular sport, would in turn give him, and the Church, popularity.

This church is also of course only about a hundred and fifty metres from the Stadium of Domitian and not far from the Odeon, although any relationships here are impossible to prove beyond their proximity. Nevertheless, the building of a church in the heart of the entertainment area of the Campus Martius, at this early date, is significant in itself. Whatever the case, there appears to be a link between Damasus'

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[76] A more detailed discussion of the church can be found in chapter 3.
[77] The two names are known from inscriptions from the church - *ICUR*. II. 134, n.5 (*CBCR*, II.145).
[78] *ICUR.*, II. 135, n.7.
[79] *CBCR*, II.146.
[80] For a full account of the topographical battle between Ursinian and Damasian groups in the city see Curran J.R., *Pagan City and Christian Capital*, pp.137-142.
[81] Suet. *Calig*.55.

successful use of *quadrigarii* and the appearance of a *titulus* in his name right next to the Green faction's stables or club house.[82]

This likely association is emphasised by the foundation, by Damasus, of S.Anastasia less than 40m from the Circus Maximus in region eleven. **(see Fig.3p)** There has been some doubt as to whether Damasus did found this church, as a fifth century inscription by Pope Hilarius (461-7) only says he decorated the apse, and there is no mention of the foundation in Damasus' *vita* in the *Liber Pontificalis*.[83] It is however very likely to be his foundation due to his role in the decoration, likely to be the first, combined with the remains of a fourth-century apse and altar that have been found under the current church.[84] Also, S. Anastasia is not mentioned in any other fourth-century life in the *Liber Pontificalis*, or indeed under Hilarius', so its absence needs to be explained in another way.

Curran stresses its proximity to the pagan temples and imperial palaces of the Palatine, but for me its closeness to the Circus is equally or more significant.[85] The basilica itself was built in the mid-fourth century into an *insula*, which formerly contained a shop/apartment complex. There is no evidence to suggest that this site was already a place in which Christians congregated.[86] The *insula* had narrow streets on its left and right, which closed it in from the Palatine buildings above and the road by the Circus respectively.[87] All these factors makes it very likely that choosing such an unusual position for a Christian place of worship went beyond any need for a parish church in the area, but rather instead to make a statement of some sort. Damasus' reliance on charioteers from his election dispute could be a clue to its placement, as a church being squeezed between two streets, less than 40 metres from the Circus Maximus, does imply a will to find a spot in such proximity. Was this to acknowledge the support of the Greens once more, or to provide a power base for himself near to where they plied their trade? The church may also have been an opportunity for the

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[82] The church's proximity to the Theatre of Pompey, and the 'Green's' becoming a theatrical group as well, may provide another, albeit more tenous, association with Damasus' foundation. However, the evidence for this development of the circus factions only begins in the mid-fifth century, and comes from the east (Roueché C., *Performers and Partisans at Aphrodisias*, p.45).

[83] *ICUR*. II. 24, n.25 & 150, n.18; *ILCV*. 1782.

[84] *CBCR*. I. 47-61.

[85] Curran, *Pagan City*, pp.142-144.

[86] Snyder G.F., *Ante Pacem*, pp.80-1.

[87] *CBCR*, I.45; *LTUR*, I.37-8. There are some arched chambers to the right of the church that were part of the circus (Platner/Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, p.118). See also Whitehead P.W., 'The Church of S. Anastasia in Rome', *AJA* (1927), pp. 405-20 for an alternative, now rejected, theory to explain the location of the church.

ecclesiastical authorities to link themselves physically with such popular entertainment, and be associated with it, or at least be in a position to influence it. Indeed, the *titulus* may have been deliberately placed here to provide somewhere for the charioteers to give thanks to God after a victory, as part of the Christianisation of the games the Christian emperors were keen to promote.[88] Whatever the case, the presence here of a Christian church next to a building dripping with pagan shrines, was a bold step.

As we have seen by the nature of the laws the Christian emperors brought in, no doubt from pressure from the Church, it could not stop Christians from going to the games when they should have been going to church. Damasus seems to have realised this, and was willing to embrace these civic events, and use their popularity, as part of his policy of thanking a group of charioteers for his successful election, and persuading the Christian population of the city that he was the legitimate and better choice as bishop. As such, the *titulus Anastasiae* would have been a central part of this policy, that is bringing the church to the people, if you will, and as a part of the Christianisation of the events in the Circus. Together with the *titulus Damasi*, built next to the stables of the Green circus faction, Damasus is acknowledging the role played by charioteers in his election as bishop, but also acknowledging the value in a pragmatic approach to the circus games. He used their undoubted popularity to improve his own and that of Christianity's in the city, rather than trying to start a fight he could not win. This church brought Christianity into the everyday life of the city and into the lives of most of its population in one stroke.

The only other church foundation of this period that fits the criterion of a possible link with a circus, is of course the extramural S.Pietro in Vaticano. The reasoning behind the placement of this key foundation on the east wall of the *Circus Gai et Neronis* has a far simpler explanation however. **(see Fig.1a)** This is of course that the church was to be built as a commemoration of St. Peter and his martyrdom under Nero. By tradition he was believed to have been buried just outside the circus, the circus itself thought to be the place of his martyrdom, where a cemetery existed. That is, the focus of the church, the top of the nave, had to be on this burial spot, which meant the west side of this large church used the east wall of the circus.[89] In other words, the close proximity of the circus is incidental to the importance of the site as the burial place of

[88] See n.37.

[89] For the idea that St.Peter was originally buried on the Via Appia, and only later moved to the Vatican site in the mid-third century, see Holloway R.R., *Constantine and Rome*, pp.146-55.

the apostle. Further, this circus seems to have been already out of use, early second century tombs have been found within it.[90] It obviously retained its structural integrity though until the fourth-century encroachment. Nevertheless, building over part of that circus, the focus of the Neronian persecutions, was no doubt an added symbolic bonus for its imperial founder and for Christians in general.

Amphitheatres

There are other Christian foundations that were also built close to entertainment arenas, in these cases amphitheatres, but it is less clear with these examples whether there was any purpose behind this. I will therefore mention them here, but only briefly. Nevertheless, even if their existence proximate to an amphitheatre, was incidental for the builder, for the worshippers in the church such an arena would have been an important feature of, and a stark contrast to, the ideology and ceremony they were experiencing.

The church of S. Clemente was less than three hundred metres from the Colosseum in the area of the four *ludi*, or gladiator training schools, and the *Summam Choragium*.[91] **(Fig.4l)** This could all be no more than a coincidence, but if, as some evidence suggests, this building only became a Christian space under Damasus, it could be indicative of the continuing policy of that bishop to connect Christian establishments with places of entertainment.[92] This evidence for a Damasian foundation is not definitive however, and there is no other convincing proof of Christian activity prior to the mid-380s.[93] This means the motivation for its initial construction on this site was not simply the expansion of an earlier Christian centre. The *Summam Choragium*, now known to be to the north of the church, between it and the Baths of Trajan, was the storehouse for all the paraphernalia connected to the games and spectacles in the city.[94] For this building to be so near to a structure that represented all that was against such

[90] *LTUR*.V.147; *LTS* III.11-12.
[91] *LTUR*. I.278-9, III. 195-8, IV. 386-7.
[92] *CBCR*. I.118. The evidence for a Damasian foundation comes from a fragment of an illegible inscription found in the pavement of the lower (fourth century) church. It was Philocolean script, a style of lettering used under Damasus.
[93]The only piece of evidence that suggests an earlier Christian presence is a slave collar saying to return the wearer ...*Victori acolito a(d) dominicu(m) Clementis*. This cannot be dated reliably however. The church is mentioned by Jerome in 392, or before 385, when he left Rome (*De Vir. Illus.*, xv);*CBCR*. I.133; Pietri C., *Roma Christiana*. I.471; Snyder G.F., *Ante Pacem*, pp.76-7.
[94] *LTUR*. IV. 386-7.

entertainments – they were around 150m apart - could be deliberate, but this is uncertain without some corroborative evidence. So whether this church was to influence, or less likely to challenge, this aspect of urban life, or neither, we cannot say. Its location is interesting in any case.

A similar example is the church of S. Croce in Gerusalemme in the far south-east of the city next to the *Amphitheatrum Castrense*. **(Fig.4m)** The church itself was a conversion of one of the large halls within the imperial residence known as the Sessorian palace, created in order, it is said, to house some fragments of the True Cross Constantine's mother Helena had brought back from the Holy Land. This imperial palace is thought to date from around the time of Elagabalus and was the residence of Helena, with the church being, effectively, a palace chapel.[95] Whether the church was founded when Helena was alive or under one of her grandsons is debatable however.[96] If Helena was instrumental in the foundation it could be easily argued that its location was to give a devout woman a personal place of prayer, and also perhaps to house the fragments of the True Cross. If however the church was created later, after her death, or even if the Cross was only later put there, we could argue for an alternative reason to choose this site, that is, it was built here to be a part of, or to challenge the activities in the amphitheatre.

The small *Amphitheatrum Castrense* was an Elagabalan construction, which by the fourth century was part of the Aurelian Wall. There is no reason to think it did not still function however. **(Fig.4n)** Just to the east was the *Circus Varianus*, or at least what remained of it, the Aurelian Wall cutting through its upper half, so we must assume it was out of use. This again is early third century in date.[97] Elagabalus clearly sought to make this part of the city a centre of power and influence for himself, with his new palace being situated between an amphitheatre and a circus to attract the crowds. As the church was an imperial foundation, and as the activities in the amphitheatre were important for the emperor to be linked to, this may have been a way of doing so while also seeking to Christianise the events there, or at least neutralise their pagan associations.[98] This may well have been part of Helena's thinking as well, if she was the

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[95] *LTUR*. IV.304-5.
[96] *LTUR*. I.27-8; *LP* (ed. Davis), p.xxxiii for the relic arriving later, but in turn the creation of the chapel as well occurring at that time; Ward-Perkins B., *From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, p.237; *CBCR*, I.167.
[97] *LTUR*. I. 35-6, V. 237-8.
[98] Such an imperial policy can be seen in a law of 399: *Cod.Theod.* XVI.10.17.

foundress. However, the problem surrounding the date of foundation, and the fact that the imperial palace and amphitheatre had been next to each other for a century or more, makes any deliberate assimilation between the chapel and the amphitheatre fairly unconvincing in this case.

4.3. Conclusion

The general pattern of distribution for religious buildings in relation to those dedicated to entertainment is a variable one. Many pagan temples and shrines were to be found clustered around circuses and theatres, yet the early churches of the city tended to avoid such areas or any association with such buildings. The exceptions to this, the *titulus Damasi* and *titulus Anastasiae*, are both foundations of Damasus. The only other church in the city that could really claim a similar association with the games, the *titulus Clementis* or San Clemente, could also have been a Damasian intervention. This was a bishop who seems to have viewed the popularity of the circus or amphitheatre as an opportunity, rather than as a feature of city life to avoid, a position apparently held by all other bishops of the period.

The reason for the general Christian avoidance of these areas would appear to be the strong pagan presence there, which led to their damnation in written opinion. Non-Christian views of the circus and theatre are equally unfavourable however, yet paganism's traditional links with the games and theatrical shows meant there was a natural association. It was only Damasus who was willing to confront or endure such a situation in order to bolster his own support base, but also to increase the popularity of the Christian God. Other bishops, as we have seen, relied on building churches on main thoroughfares or on hills to further Christianity's importance in the city.

5. *Churches and Baths*: Christian Worship and Secular Leisure

This part of my discussion on the early Christian topography of Rome will centre on the relationship between some of the new churches of the fourth and fifth centuries in the city and the pre-existing baths. With many early Christian centres, there is good reason to think there was some sort of connection between them and a bath house. Such a belief is based on the proximity of some examples to the large imperial *thermae* and the written records which point to links with many smaller bath houses known as *balnea*, which were a common feature of the city. Also, certain hagiographies mention baths as frequent meeting places for the early Christian communities. The nature of the relationship between the church and the baths is a somewhat ambiguous one however, although it is likely it was practical and pragmatic. The views of some Christian writers suggest that the baths were a place to avoid because of their decadence, yet others imply they were a valuable resource because of the cleanliness they encouraged. Nevertheless, it seems clear from the location of many of the early churches in Rome, that a pragmatic approach was taken. The baths gave access to clean flowing water, and were thus ideal places to conduct many Christian ceremonies, and so may explain the phenomenon of many churches being situated close to them or being associated with them. This was a period when most Christian centres did not have formal baptisteries so such facilities had to be found elsewhere. The use of simple wells or fountains would have provided a short term solution, but the Church was now a respectable organisation endowed by the emperor. Thus, a more formal setting for this most crucial of Christian ceremonies was now appropriate and desirable. Indeed, this explains the creation of purpose-built baptisteries from the fifth century. The common practice of full immersion baptisms, to replicate Christ's own baptism by John the Baptist in the River Jordan, necessitated a significant pool of water.[1] In the urban environment, it is likely the private house baths of a wealthy Christian provided this in the pre-Constantinian era. The appearance, as we will see, of private baths associated with new churches after Constantine, may simply be a continuation of this practice. Aside from baptism, ritual washing or cleansing seem to have been another important

[1] Mark 1:9-10.

role the baths played for Christians, as well as part of the service provided by the poor-houses that appeared later in the city.

In addition to this, the public imperial baths were places where the population of the city frequently visited and such movements of people would have benefited the popularity of a church situated nearby. In this way, those churches that were built close to such complexes may have had a dual motive for being built there, that is to utilise the baths and to be the church for its customers.

As elsewhere, in order to provide a context for my thoughts, I will look at the non-Christian as well as the Christian views of the baths before discussing both the pagan and Christian buildings that are connected to the baths in some way. The interesting picture that emerges is one where pagan religious association with the baths is rare, and they can as a result be seen as fairly non-religious places before the fourth century. This seems to have encouraged a Christian presence there alongside the need for water, inherent in even very early Christian liturgy. It is the essentially non-religious nature of baths that has led me to separate my discussion of them from the fundamentally pagan theatre and circus. Although all three are what could be described as 'leisure' spaces, the baths are solely recreational and have no religious overtones. As such, they were treated in a very different way by the Church and so constitute a very different sort of leisure area for our purposes. The relationship between churches and baths also provides us with the only other possible exception, aside from those examples built over martyrs' tombs,[2] to the rule of pragmatic and strategic placement of the early churches of Rome. There are up to three examples of churches built into bath houses which could also have been places of early Christian congregation. It would be fair to say, however, that the reason for thinking this is based on later rather unreliable sources, so even here a more practical and pragmatic reasoning for the location of these churches seems more likely.

5.1. Christian and Non-Christian Views of Bathing and the Baths

As with the views of the literate elite concerning the circus and theatre, non-Christian and Christian opinions of bathing and the baths are quite similar. With both

[2] See chapter 6.

parties the consensus is one where the act of washing and going to the baths themselves is not criticised, but rather the potential moral pitfalls that could be encountered there and the dangers of going too often. This criticism centres on the issue of mixed bathing, the luxury and idleness it could encourage, and for some Christian writers, an underlying pagan element in such establishments. For the purposes of this chapter, I am using the term 'non-Christian' in order to describe what is in effect the opinions of 'pagan' writers of the baths. I am doing this as it is unlikely that these writers' belief in the gods influenced their thoughts on everyday issues, such as bathing. For such writers there was no moral code from above to be adhered to, but rather a set of commonly accepted social norms and values to be respected. It is also equally likely that many such commentators were sceptical of the gods' existence, or not especially religious, yet shared similar views to those who were dedicated pagans. So 'non-Christian' is a deliberately broad label. For Christian writers, the unambiguous morality they adhered to, did, in contrast, directly influence their beliefs on many matters, including the vexed question of bathing. Whether these two sets of opinions influenced building projects in Rome will be tackled later.

5.1.1. Non-Christian views

In general we can say non-Christian discussion of the baths was focused on the issue of mixed bathing, that is bathing with both men and women in the same establishment. In spite of this we do get a lot of discussion on the benefits of bathing, but again with caveats. What is also apparent is a separation between the popular consensus and the opinions of most writers, however some seem to reflect the more general mood.

The most obvious examples of the latter are the epigrams of Martial, where mixed bathing is seen as a way to meet and seduce women.[3] This was no doubt a preoccupation for many men when going to the baths if there were women there. However, this attitude in the sources is one of the exceptions, the majority sharing a conservative view of them, for example they are often mentioned in association with luxury or excess.[4] Seneca writes against the luxury and decadence that was now

[3] Martial, *Epig.* 3.51, 3.72, 3.87, 3.93.13-14, 7.35, 11.47 & 11.75.
[4] Plutarch, *Pyrrhus*, 16.2; Suet. *Calig.* 37; Dio, XXVII.94.2; Claudian, *In Eutrop.* II.409-14.

associated with their interiors as apposed to the simpler constructions in earlier times.[5] With this he sees a move away from going to the baths for washing, with it now being just an act of purely indulgent and extravagant excess, with washing being superfluous. This is a rather similar attitude to many Christian writers as we will see, and as such may be a common view amongst the educated classes, regardless of religious affiliation. A similar sentiment is echoed by Quintilian, who equates mixed bathing with female adultery.[6] Nonetheless, the benefits of bathing are mentioned frequently, often in association with health, and as a part of cures for some diseases.[7] However the potential problems it could cause if a person was injured or unwell are also expressed.[8] Cassius Dio also describes the baths as beneficial for a city, but only if used in moderation by the inhabitants.[9] The imperial stance takes the similar approach of disagreeing with mixed bathing and legislating against it, which in turn shows that it may have occurred widely and was seen as a problem.[10] Perhaps to make clear he was not against bathing altogether, Alexander Severus in taking this action, after Elagabalus had revoked the ban, also extended the opening hours for baths. Similarly, the Emperor Tacitus reduced them again, a sign of the traditional conservative attitude towards their use by him, but he also had public baths built on the site of his house, presumably in Rome.[11] These imperial edicts, although by no means certain to have taken place due to the source they come from – and as such more of a reflection of the *Historia Augusta*'s fourth-century writer or writers' beliefs – do show us at least that a moralising stance was expected from emperors on the issue, a stance mirrored by the literate elite.

5.1.2. Christian views

Bathing is the one form of leisure that Christian writers did not on principle disagree with. There were, however, degrees of opinion in educated Christian circles. This ranged from the, presumably rare, Eastern ascetic view that washing in itself was sinful because pleasure could be derived from the activity, to the more common view

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[5] Seneca, *Ep.* 86.
[6] Quintilian, *Inst.* 5.9.14.
[7] Strabo, *Geog.* V.3.6 & 11; Celsus, *De Med.* I.3.23; VI.6.27 & 38.
[8] Celsus, *De Med.* VIII.4.22; IV.27.2.
[9] Dio, LXXIII.22.5.
[10] *SHA*, Hadrian, 18.10; M. Aurelius, 23.8. On the issue of the commonality or not of mixed bathing and nudity in the baths see Fagan G.G., *Bathing in Public in the Roman World*, pp.24-29 & notes.
[11] *SHA*, Alex. Sev. 24.2 & 6, Tacitus, 10.2 & 4.

that bathing and bathing establishments should be embraced and regarded as part of Christian life. Archaeology and topography, as we will see, backs up this latter view as the attitude in Rome. One likely reason for this acceptance of bathing is the important role that water had in Christian belief and liturgical practice. The most important ceremony involving water was of course baptism, but from this the concept of water in general being purifying and cleansing, in a spiritual as well as a corporeal way, became commonplace. There were still some reservations with the baths amongst some Christian writers, although naturally, these concerns may not have been shared by the majority of Christians in Rome or elsewhere. Most of these commentators were also from the Greek East, so similarly their views may not have been mirrored by Christians of the Western tradition.

Views of bathing are not as widely discussed as those on the circus or theatre presumably because of their non-religious nature in contrast to that of the other 'leisure' areas. However Clement of Alexandria in the second century, Eusebius and John Chrysostom in the fourth, and Pope Gregory I in the seventh century, do express opinions that throw light on the issue. In general they do not disagree with bathing per se, but express some moral reservations on certain aspects of the experience as the non-Christian writers do.

An early but informative writer on the issue is Clement of Alexandria, writing within the Greek tradition and in a period when Christianity is regarded suspiciously by most people, and where this suspicion occasionally escalated into violent persecution. Taking these things into account we can summarise his views as follows. He concisely expresses his own criticisms of baths typifying excess, vanity and luxury, and speaks against mixed bathing. He elaborates on the latter and how adultery and dangerous lusts can be the result, and how modesty in the baths must be the priority.[12] Clement then describes the good things about the baths and bathing, that is cleanliness and health. His criticisms of them are not always based on moral teaching though. He focuses on the physical dangers of too much heat, and how this is deleterious for the skin. The ideas of excess and attending the baths too often are described alongside this, and so a utilitarian element comes into the discussion.[13] What follows is an analogy Clement makes with the cleansing of the soul through Christ, a metaphor that could both help and hinder

[12] Clem.Alex. *Paed.* III.5.31-35.
[13] Ibid, III.9.46-47.2.

Christian attendance at the baths.[14] That is, should one attend the baths to symbolically cleanse one's soul or stay away to focus on cleansing it in reality by attending church?

In the fourth century Eusebius, another writer from the East, mentions a certain James, the 'brother' of Jesus, as being very ascetic and opposed to bathing altogether.[15] Such people we assume were a small minority. Jerome, also writing in the fourth century, speaks against men and women bathing together and going to the baths every day.[16] From the East again we see a more wary and perhaps extreme attitude showing itself where John Chrysostom says how it was customary to make the sign of the cross before entering a bathhouse.[17] Whether this was a common practice in the West we cannot say. Gregory of Nyssa, also an author from the Greek tradition, gives us a possible explanation for this behaviour, that is, demons were thought to thrive there.[18] Various papyri of the third and fourth centuries do in fact suggest pagan magical activity took place in bathhouses, so Christian concerns may not have been entirely unfounded and may have been based on some experience.[19] Being papyri, this evidence originates in Egypt, so whether such activities occurred in bathhouses in Western Europe and Rome is debatable; the archaeological, historical and topographical evidence, for Rome at least, suggests that pagan activity rarely did, as we will see.

One of the few Western Christian writers who discuss bathing is Pope Gregory I in a letter or sermon to the Roman people in September 603. As such it is especially relevant for us, albeit late in date. It talks about how Sunday should be a day where God's laws must be followed, which he backs up by various quotes from scripture. This leads onto the discussion of bathing which essentially says that it must not be an activity that we derive pleasure from, of whatever sort, but rather purely a utilitarian activity to clean the body for hygienic reasons.[20] Apart then from being evidence for a continuing moralising attitude in official Christian thought, that Clement first mentioned nearly four hundred years earlier, this statement also shows how in Rome bathing was still

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[14] Clem.Alex. *Paed.*, III.9.47.4-48.2.
[15] Eusebius, *HE* II.23.4-5.
[16] Jerome, *Adv. Iovinian.*, 2.36, *Ep.* 45.5.
[17] Chrysostom, *In Act. Apost. Hom.* X.5. Also Tertullian in the early third century- *De Corona.* 3. Both sources suggest, however, that this was merely a habitual act by Christians before many day-to-day activities.
[18] Gregory Nys., *Vit. S. Greg. Thaum.*,. PG 46. 952A.
[19] Eg. *P.Oslo* I.12, verso 11334-40 etc. (Nielsen T. *Thermae et Balnea*, p.147). More personal everyday charms and superstitions were no doubt used or played out in the baths as much as anywhere else- Amm.Marc. XXIX.2.28. This could scarcely be regarded as 'religious' activity though, and would have been largely unnoticed.
[20] Gregory, *Ep.* XIII.3.

popular, for the 'wrong' reasons perhaps, and was still widely occurring. This was in spite of the cutting of the aqueducts nearly sixty years before during the siege of Vitiges the Goth, which are said to have put the large imperial baths out of use. This seems to suggest the smaller *balnea* were still patronised and kept running by the now Christian administration, and that the larger imperial *thermae* continued to be used to some extent. All this again highlights the difficulty the Church had with the activity. That is, it clearly did not disagree with it in principle and saw the hygienic benefits, but also was very aware of the potential moral pitfalls that no doubt did occur there. Augustine, also writing in the Western tradition, recognises the positive hygienic and health factors, but at the same time warns against their over frequent use.[21] Ward-Perkins nicely summarises the situation as a move away from ideas of luxury to those of necessity, which is mirrored in other forms of Christian patronage.[22]

In some sense then this attitude is an empire-wide orthodox Christian line seen in both Eastern and our later Western writers. Where the divergence occurs seems to be the degree of danger involved in going to the bath house. In the East it is seen that there is inherent moral and spiritual danger in them, even evil pagan demons. In the West there is the need to avoid luxury and idleness, but even at a late date, there is an obvious continued popularity. This asceticism and wariness of classical culture, of which bathing was an important part, is not as pronounced in the West as in the East. So although Rome may be an exception with regards continued building patronage into the fifth century, the popularity for bathing that seems to be apparent there was no doubt a reflection of a wider attitude that just could not be realised elsewhere in the West, due to the lack of working baths.

A more pragmatic view seems to have taken hold amongst the more general Christian population with regard to the baths. Within the Acts of St. Justin, he meets his followers in the 'Baths of Timothy' in Rome, which may be the 'Baths of Novatus', themselves only known through the Acts of SS. Pudentiana and Praxedis. Timothy is described as the brother of Novatus, so the two sets of baths are believed to be one and the same. What makes the whole story more likely though is the possible existence of baths under the church of S. Pudenziana, the legendary foundation over this site in the

[21] Augustine, *Ep.* CCXI.13.
[22] Ward-Perkins B., *From Classical Antiquity*, p.152.

second century.[23] Another possible example of baths as Christian meeting places could be those found under part of the church of S. Pietro in Vincoli in Rome.[24] The church could therefore have been built on an older space designated for bathing and utilised for Christian use, as with S. Pudenziana. There are further examples of such a practice in Constantinople and Carthage.[25] So whatever the believability of the story of S. Pudenziana, it does seem likely that some Christian groups met, or sought refuge, in baths, both before and after Christianity became legal. Whether such parties actually bathed at the same time is an open question, but it may show a tradition of Christian use of bathing areas for practical purposes in spite of any reservations they may have had about some of the activities that occurred in them. This pragmatism was a necessity before the fourth century, but seems to have continued in some quarters into the fourth century and beyond. An apparent pattern in the written sources is that the subject of bathing is only discussed fairly consistently after Constantine's acceptance of Christianity, and does suggest a willingness to criticise the practice only after the baths themselves were no longer needed to be places of refuge or venues for secret meetings. This belated criticism does not seem to have affected their popularity, judging by the continued restoration of the large bath houses in Rome and the existence of over eight or nine hundred smaller ones in the mid-fourth century.[26]

The question is then whether the non-Christian or Christian elites would want to encourage people to go to the baths, discourage them or neither. The Christian evidence we have looked at so far indicates a wary approval within the Western tradition and an element of endorsement for hygienic purposes. The same is true within the non-Christian written record, with more obvious acceptance in the main. How these attitudes manifested themselves on the ground in Rome is the next section of this chapter.

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[23] Baths of Novatus/Timothy- Cabrol F.(ed.), *Dictionnaire d'archeologie chretienne et de liturgie*, II.1.111-2 & refs. ('Bains'); *LTUR* I. 165-6 & refs.; legendary foundation- *AA.SS.* Mai IV.300.
[24] *CBCR*.III.221-3. These examples will be discussed further below.
[25] Cabrol (ed.), *Dictionnaire*, II.1.115 & refs.
[26] Caracalla; *CIL* XV.1665.3-4 & 1669.7; Decius; *CIL* VI.1703; Constantine; *CIL* VI.1750; *Not./Cur.* Breviarium – Nordh, p.105.6. Three manuscripts describe more than nine hundred, the remainder more than eight hundred.

5.2. Case Studies

5.2.1. The Pagan Topography

This section will look at those buildings that were dedicated to the worship of the gods that could have had some sort of relationship with a large or small bathhouse. Places where there was water, such as springs or wells, dotted the city. There were ten thousand three hundred and fifty two in the fourth century.[27] These were no doubt mainly used for washing and drinking, and as with Christian churches, are unlikely to have served a formal religious function in connection with a nearby shrine or temple, purpose-built facilities would have been provided for that.

The private smaller baths in Rome, known as *balnea*, were also a very frequent feature of the Roman landscape, and seem to have been the haunts of the middle and upper-classes as social clubs. **(Fig.5a)** This was certainly the case in Martial's day when the only large baths were those of Agrippa, Nero and Titus. Even the addition of three enormous imperial establishments by the fourth century does not seem to have affected this situation.[28] The impression is therefore that these smaller privately owned bath houses were frequented by the educated classes and had perhaps a 'members-only' policy, whereas the large imperial baths were for everyone else. This picture does not include any religious element, and Martial, our only source for what went on at these places, only refers to them as having a social function. We can be fairly safe therefore in assuming that the gods' place was outside of the *balnea*, in which human activity took priority. Even if a temple or shrine was nearby, as some undoubtedly were, there is no reason to think they were connected in any way. However, we do have some evidence, from the second century AD, that private baths were used by the cult of Isis. Apuleius writes that as part of the initiation into the cult, he underwent a ceremony, very much like a Christian baptism, in the *balneas*.[29] Even though such pagan religious behaviour in a *balnea* appears to be unusual, the case for saying that early Christian groups utilised the same buildings for the same purpose is therefore more than credible, especially in the post-Constantinian era.

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[27] *Not./Cur*.Breviarum – Nordh, p.105.7-8.
[28] For these baths as pre-dinner meeting places- Martial, *Ep.* 9.19, 11.52.1-4; the fourth century- Amm. Marc. XXVIII.4.10.
[29] Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, XI.23.1.

The large imperial baths were one of the main examples of non-religious public buildings in the city. As most temples and shrines in the city pre-dated their construction, pagan activity in or around them was minimal. An exception to this picture may have existed within Trajan's Baths during the Saturnalia in late antiquity.[30] The only pagan structures that could be argued to have been connected to these baths in some way may have been Mithraea, but this is only based on three examples of the twenty-six or twenty-seven that are known in the city.[31] **(Fig.5b)** The first of these, and the largest known Mithraeum in Rome, was found under the east wall of the Baths of Caracalla under the semi-circular *exedra*. **(Fig.5c)** Its construction seems to have been just after that of the baths, which shows it was deliberately placed in this area, and the existence of an *impluvium*, and the discovery of related cult objects within it, suggests a connection between water and the ritual performed here.[32] Whether they used the bath facilities for this, or that proximity to the baths was sufficient for the ceremonies, we cannot say. There is clearly a relationship between the two however, but a hidden one. A *speleum* has also been found in the area where the Baths of Constantine were situated on the Quirinal. This bath's fourth century construction may have meant it put the Mithraeum, dated to the end of the third, out of commission, although this is not certain.[33] A final example is the Mithraeum situated just outside the Baths of Sura, a modest Trajanic construction on the Aventine.[34] The Mithraeum itself was built into a house in the late second century, and as such may have been done so here because of the proximity of the baths. The significance of the church of S. Prisca above it has been discussed in an earlier chapter.

Our ignorance of Mithraic liturgy and ceremony and the lack of evidence for the location of the majority of these cult centres in the city means the significance of relations between a Mithraic 'temple' and a bath house cannot be gauged. These centres were usually in private houses or *insulae* so were not outwardly remarkable, so such

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[30] See n.53. The Portico of Livia just to the north, although dedicated to *Concordia*, does not seem to have had any religious elements to it and is described as simply a colonnade. (Suet. *Aug.*29.4; Dio, LIV.23.6). Cf. Platner/Ashby, *Dictionary*, p.423. See *FUR*, pl.23, *FUM*, fg. 11 for its central fountain & not a shrine; *LTUR* IV.127 & refs.

[31] *LTUR*. III. 257-70 There could have been as many as seven hundred in the city, based on their frequency in Ostia (Coarelli F., 'Topografia Mitriaca di Roma' in Bianci U. (ed.), *Mysteria Mithrae*, , pp.76-7.

[32] It may have started life as a Serapeum, a favoured cult of Caracalla's - *LTUR*. III. 267-8.

[33] *LTUR*. III. 263.

[34] Dio.LXVIII.15.3; Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 13.8. Mithraic remains have also been found under the Baths of Titus, but not a Mithraeum- Coarelli, 'Topografia', pp.70-1; *LTUR*. III.260.

relationships where they did occur would not have been apparent to the casual observer. Nevertheless, for members of the cult, such a connection seems to have been beneficial and practical.

In any case, it is significant to note that before Christian building began, the baths and the areas around them were still visibly and outwardly non-religious. A century after such building had begun they no longer were. This change, as we will see, does appear to be an attempt to Christianise one of the few superficially secular spaces in Rome.

5.2.2. The Christian Topography

The most numerous and convincing relationship that occurs between a church and a secular building in fourth and fifth-century Rome is that with a bath-house. The nature of this connection seems likely to have been a practical one that suited both establishments. For the Christians it made matters easier for the setting up of a *fons* or font, which at this time was a pool for full immersion baptisms. Also water was required for the washing of hands by the priest when using the oil of exorcism, *oleum exorcidiatum* and the oil of chrism, *oleum chrismae* during the ceremony.[35] Also, washing in general was encouraged for ritual reasons connected with a Feast Day or before entering a church.[36] By the fourth century all this could have been done openly and so also provided steady 'customers' for the bath house. Wells or springs, I believe, would have been too crude and informal for the post-Constantinian Church for such an important ceremony as baptism, or other associated rituals. Such reasoning is apparent by the construction of formal baptisteries from the fifth century. The use of pre-existing baths, large or small, was a short term solution in order to provide a formal setting for baptismal rites. The use of bath facilities by the cult of Isis for its initiation ceremony, as we have seen, should tell us their use for religious purposes had a precedent.

What made their use more likely is the non-religious nature of these buildings, unlike the circus or theatre. The possible exceptions to this were shrines to the imperial

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[35] *LP.* I. 171 & Cabrol (ed.), *Dictionnaire*, VI.2.2778-82 ('Huile'); Pietri, *RC*, I.106-111. There was indeed a large baptismal ceremony that was held on Holy Saturday every year up to the sixth century at least. This does not exclude the possibility of smaller individual ceremonies being held in other churches throughout the year however.

[36] Ward-Perkins, *From Classical Antiquity*, p.127, 141 (An elaborate fountain provided at St. Peter's for washing- Paulinus, *Ep.* XIII.13).

cult, Hercules or hidden Mithraea in the large imperial establishments within the outer precincts. There may have been pagan activity in thermo-mineral baths based around natural springs as well.[37] In general though, and especially in Rome where the latter type of bath are not known to have existed, this would have been a non-religious environment that would not discourage Christian attendance, and indeed may have encouraged their use as places of refuge or for meetings and baptisms, as we have said.[38]

An issue we have to examine first before we look at the topography itself is the subject of *balnea*. This is a plainer less sophisticated term than *thermae*, a word which was not used until the imperial period, and tended, at that time, to signify the large, public, more luxurious bathing establishments. *Balnea* seem to have been private bathing establishments judging by their personalised names, and as such were much smaller than their large imperial counterparts. **(see Fig.5a)** From the mid-fourth century lists of the contents of the city, the *Notitia* and *Curiosum*, there seems to have been eight hundred and fifty six such establishments or more in Rome at that time.[39] We know by name as many as fifty-one from various sources, although this may be less if some entries in the *Notitia* or *Curiosum* are taken as only one building. Only twenty-nine of these can be located approximately and only three have been found.[40] **(see Fig.5b)** From the albeit uncertain numbers we have for each area of the city, region fourteen across the Tiber is described as having on average a *balneum* every seventeen square metres, in region twelve approximately the same but only one every forty square metres or so in region five in the east of the city. Nevertheless their frequency is startling, and apart from suggesting that many were probably for private use only, like a club or for a family, it also indicates that wherever you built in the city one of these bath houses would be nearby. As such, to justify a link between a small bath house and a church explicit evidence is required. That evidence does exist for a few examples.

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[37] Yegül, F., *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, pp.124-5; baths situated around these springs may explain the statements of some Christians of the activities there (see nn. 17-19). See also Augustine, *Ep.*XLVI.15.

[38] See nn.23-25.

[39] For the problems and issues with the names, the ownership, clientele and with their numbers see Fagan, *Bathing*, pp.123-6, 189-222 & 357 respectively. For the latter see also Yegül, *Baths & Bathing*, p.74. What is not in doubt is that there was very many.

[40] For ambiguity in the *Notitia* and *Curiosum* see for example *Not./Cur.* I. – Nordh, p.73.15, p.74.1, p..95.17-18; see Fagan, *Bathing*, pp.359-66 for a list of the baths; the *Balnea Caenidianum, Gratiarum* and *Cerealis* have been found –*LTUR*. I. 160-1, II. 79, *Caenidianum* only in Richardson, *Dictionary*, p.48.

For the cases we have, most of the relationships are as a result of imperial, aristocratic or perhaps papal donations given to a church. We see this with the *Titulus Equitii*, which in itself is not far from Domitian's baths but received a house with its own bath house; S. Lorenzo in Damaso which had baths nearby connected to it; and S. Vitale which gained two baths and a house with a bath.[41] These gifts, recorded in the *LP*, are clearly to provide revenue for the church in question so that it is self-supporting, but also, by this time, to serve a ritual function, that is for baptisms or for the use of the priests and others associated with the church. If they were endowments provided by the bishop this more practical relationship seems even more likely. It is therefore hard to see pagans being allowed into these *balnea*. Normal bathing probably occurred in them as well though, and it may have been independently run with a rent paid to the church in question, so a dual function is very likely. These baths, as such, need not necessarily have been very near to the church, but it is unlikely they were very far away. Such establishments may also have been set up to rival the other secular baths, which were regarded as potential dens of immorality, so these church-owned examples could have been seen as 'safer' for clergy, and possibly the general Christian population as well.[42]

This idea of the Church using at least small bath houses for liturgical purposes is furthered by a brief statement in the life of Pope Liberius in the *LP*. It concerns the events after the dispute between the pope and Felix surrounding the Arian Constantius II. The passage mentions how members of the clergy and *sacerdotes*:

"*...neque in ecclesia neque in balnea haberent introitum*"[43]

This clearly connects the two in a Christian context, and implies priests of various grades would often use them for purposes linked with Christian activity.

Another more intimate spatial association between the church and the bath house can be shown with the three examples of churches built in this period actually within or on top of a bath building. These are S. Pudenziana, S. Caecilia and S. Pietro in Vincoli. As such they may be actual physical evidence in Rome of baths being Christian meeting-places or being deliberately chosen for use as, or with, baptisteries. In these

[41] *LP*. I. 170, 213, 221. Also *LP*. I. 233 & 242-3.For the debate as to the origin of these endowments see Hillner J., 'Families, Patronage and the Titular Churches of Rome, c.300-c.600' in Cooper K & Hillner J. (eds.), *Dynasty, Patronage and Authority in a Christian Capital: Rome 300-900* (2007) & refs.

[42] Ward-Perkins, *From Classical Antiquity*, p. 135; baths and bathing, as well as being for clergy, took on a charitable function also, especially in later centuries: Ward-Perkins, *From Classical Antiquity*, pp.135-146 and refs.; pope Symmachus (498-514) *built* baths connected to S.Paolo f-l-m, S.Michele and S. Panacrazio, *LP* I.262; another church with no baths nearby, S.Anastasia, was provided with a baptistery by the urban prefect Longinianus in 400/402- *ICUR* II.150 n.19.

[43] *LP* I.208.

cases the church was literally on the same site as the source of water, rather than nearby or the church owning such a place elsewhere.

S. Pudenziana, like many churches of this period has an early history that is difficult to prove and that is shrouded in myth. If the *Liber Pontificalis* and martyr acts are to be believed this is one of the oldest sites for a Christian centre in Rome. They describe the bishop Pius I (c.145-164?) dedicating a church at the *thermae Novati* which were on the *Vicus Patricius*, at the request of a Praxedis, to be named after her sister Pudentiana. The *LP* also says Pius built a font for baptism there.[44] However this whole story in the list of Popes is a later interpolation, probably from the eleventh century, and seems to rely heavily on the legendary martyr acts of the two women in question, which are sixth or seventh century. In these Praxedis asks Pius to create the church in the Baths of a Novatus, the recently deceased brother of Timothy who were both fellow Christians, as they are now out of use and are also large and spacious.[45]

Nevertheless, the existence of baths under or near S. Pudenziana seems likely. The archaeology has revealed evidence for a Hadrianic house which was completed in 129 to which was attached a pre-existing courtyard structure. About ten years later this courtyard was filled with vaults in order to support a terrace that was made level with the roof of the second century house, which therefore changed in use. This has been argued to have been built in order to support a bath building with a basilical room, into which the church was later installed. **(Fig.5d)** This theory rests on the discovery of decoratively shaped recesses in the floor of the Roman building on the church site. A mosaic of marine subjects was built over them later. **(Fig.5e)** It is the second century date of this conversion that may have given rise to the confusion and story surrounding the church's very early creation. However, it is believed by some that the nature of the architecture of the building in which the church was constructed does not allow it to be a bath complex. It has been argued to have been a courtyard with fountains for example.[46] Nevertheless, if this was just one basilical room in a larger bath building – perhaps the *frigidarium*, with the tanks found under the nave the plunge pools – it explains the lack of other bath features and does not rule out the possibility for the rest

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[44] *LP* I.132; the current church is indeed alongside this ancient street on the region six side.
[45] *LP*, I.132 (n.8); see n.23. The legend itself is first recorded in the eighth century; *LTUR*. I. 165-6; *AA.SS*. Mai IV.300. For a propogandal use for this story see Llewellyn P.A.B. 'The Roman Church during the Laurentian Schism: Priests and Senators', *Church History* 45 (1976), pp. 418-427.
[46] *CBCR*. III. 279, 287-93; *LTUR*. IV. 166-8, II. 166-7; Guidobaldi F. 'Osservazioni sugli edifici romani in cui si insediò *l'ecclesia pudentiana*' in *Ecclesia Urbis. Atti del congresso internazionale di studi sulle chiese di Roma (IV-X secolo)*, p.1057; Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, p.138.

of the baths to be situated nearby. Further, a reference is made to baths once being here from a fragmentary inscription, which is likely to date from the late fourth century.[47]

Yet, to add to the confusion, within the structure of S. Pudenziana were found bricks bearing stamps of Quintus Servilius Pudens, consul in 166. It is likely then, at least after the second-century conversion, he was the owner of the baths or house. A Pudens is also mentioned in the acts of Pudentiana and Praxedis as providing his house for a *titulus*, where a baptistery was built. It is not out of the question then that this *titulus*, the later foundation in that family name, is now S. Pudenziana. The oratory formerly dedicated to Saint Pastor (another figure featuring in the acts) located in the church, and now the 'Capella Caetani', could also be the baptistery in question. Both are likely to be fourth century though.[48] In any case it indicates that the complex was owned by this family and seems to provide a more likely explanation for the name of the later church.

The first reliable evidence for S. Pudenziana's existence comes from an inscription found in the church mentioning a Maximus, one of the priests who built or rebuilt and decorated it, and whose work began in 390.[49] The question whether we have here a previous Christian meeting-place now being formalised and embellished is of course impossible to prove, the evidence for it seems anachronistic and unreliable. However a connection with Christians and the probable baths on this site from an early time, although unlikely, is not impossible. Apart from being areas largely devoid of pagan ornament, the easy access to clean water and the facilities surrounding that makes their practical use by Christians, for baptisms or other liturgical practice, seem likely. To hold meetings here, perhaps in quiet isolated corners in earlier times, would also seem a sensible thing to have done. It was thus this pragmatic utilisation that may have made this, and other bath houses, regular Christian venues and provided a tradition that meant some could have evolved into formal purpose built churches from the fourth

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[47] *CIL* VI. 29769- *Maximus has olim therm(as)...* Its context is unknown, but it is assumed to be related to S. Pudenziana because of the appearance of the priest Maximus alongside a reference to baths (De Rossi, *Bull. Arch. Crist.* (1867), p.55). See n.49.

[48] Indeed the church was known as the *titulus Pudentis* in 499 and 595- *MGH.AA*.XII. 411, *MGH*.Ep. I.367; Cecchelli M., 'Il sacello di S. Pietro e l'oratorio di S. Pastore in S. Pudenziana: una messa a punto' *Romano Barbarica* 9 (1986-7), pp.47-64. S. Prassede, situated about 350m to the south off the *clivus Suburanus*, is associated with the *titulus Praxedis* or *Praxidae*, which is probably fifth century- *MGH.AA*.XII.410,414; *LP* II.54.

[49] See n.47. The other priests were Ilicius and Leopardus, the project was finished under Innocent I (401-17) (*ILCV* 1772A/B & 1773A). A lost epitaph from 384 suggests congregation & clergy- *ICUR* I.347. Referred to as *Pudentiana* at that time. Is there confusion with the *titulus Pudentis*, or was the name interchangeable as at *Iulii et Callisti*?

century. We cannot say for sure however, whether that Christian presence began in S. Pudenziana in the second or the fourth century.

Another similar example is S. Pietro in Vincoli, just to the west of the Baths of Trajan. It had initially been known as *Sancti Apostolorum in Eudoxia*, after the daughter of Emperor Theodosius II and Eudocia, who provided the money to build or rebuild the church.[50] This was done under Sixtus III (432-40) when the baths to the west were still in operation. There could have been a previous ecclesiastical structure on this site, but this is by no means certain. The remains of a rich *domus* and an apsidal hall have been discovered under the church. **(Fig.5f)** These finds, combined with inscriptions from the church that mention Sixtus and Eudoxia separately, has meant there is a theory that originally two buildings existed here in the fifth century. One became a *titulus* and was dedicated to Peter and Paul by Sixtus III, the other was the imperial foundation by Eudoxia built probably between 450-55.[51] Under the apse of S. Pietro there has been found a second century building that encloses some tanks and a hypocaust, suggesting a bath building. **(Fig.5g)** The lower part of the north transept wall, and the wall parallel to it under the north wing of the church, are fourth century in date. This is either a different building or a later addition to the bath house. It is this brickwork that means the church cannot have been built before the first quarter of the fourth century.[52] As suggested earlier this does not mean that the bath house was not an informal Christian meeting place before that time though. Equally, as with S. Pudenziana, we may also be seeing a pragmatic use, in the fourth century, of an unused or acquired bath building for Christian liturgical purposes, as well as for worship.

The nearby Baths of Trajan were however central to the celebrations for the last few days of the Saturnalia, as this was where the *sigillaria*, or small figurines, were sold in late antiquity as part of the gift-giving for that festival.[53] That is, when the church was built, as well as these baths still being active, there was pagan activity occurring within them, albeit perhaps during that festival only. This could therefore be an example of early Christians using a small bath house, rather than the larger Trajanic one, which

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[50] See n.51 'Eudoxia'.
[51] *CBCR* III.221; *LTUR*. IV.82-3; Casti G.B. & Zandri G., *San Pietro in Vincoli*, pp. 41-58; Sixtus-*ICUR* II.110 n.67/134 n.3, 134 n.2. Eudoxia- *ICUR* II.110 n.66. Those inscriptions mentioning Sixtus indicate a joint imperial/papal project.
[52] *CBCR* III. 192-3, 221, 223, 228.
[53] Schol. *Ad Iuv.* VI.154 (fifth century?). See Suet. *Claud.* 5, 16.4 & Digest XXXII.102.1.

were only 100 metres or so away, because of religious reservations.[54] The existence of a bath house on the site of S. Pietro suggests there is unlikely to be a link between the church and the larger *thermae* in any case. The tradition of a Christian presence here would then have continued, and the building of the church could have been the evolution of that. Alternatively, the decision to build here may have been because of the water supply system that was already in place, which would have provided an easy mechanism for the basilica's baptismal ceremonies. It is likely that the reasoning was based on a mixture of these two things, as with S. Pudenziana.

The situation with S. Caecilia is also familiar. Beneath the level of the current ninth century church and just to its north – and so beyond the right aisle – lies a fourth or fifth century baptistery. Next to this there are remains of a third or early fourth century bath house, this presumably feeding the baptistery and explaining its location. **(Fig.5h)** The fact that a fourth or fifth century church was constructed right next to this, or over it, should not surprise us therefore.[55] The three structures worked together. Even if the location of the church was chosen primarily because of its proximity to the new *pons Theodosii*, providing direct access to the centre of the city along a pilgrim route,[56] on a micro level the location of these baths made it an ideal site. The location of S. Prisca also seems to have a dual motive. The fact that it lay directly over a Mithraeum is highly significant, but it may also have benefited from the proximity of the Baths of Sura just to the north. An inscription found in this area records the restoration of a *tepidarium* in 414, so the baths were still in use not long after the church was built, around 400.[57]

The next and last examples of churches with an intimate association with baths are those that were topographically linked to the large imperial *thermae*. There were three monumental examples of these imperial structures by the fourth century: the *Thermae Traianae*, *Antoninianae* and *Diocletianae*, the latter being the largest and most

[54] Remains of a small church or oratory were found in the early nineteenth century below the large semi-circular exedra of Trajan's baths, built into a room of the *Domus Aurea*. It has been attributed to Saint Felicity, but is thought to be sixth to eighth century- *CBCR* I.218; *LTUR* II.246. Its location here could mean it was founded just before the aqueducts were finally cut and these baths put out of use in 537/8, or it may provide evidence for the baths continued use, in some form or another, into the early middle ages. The structure's use as a small oratory probably meant it was not connected to the baths in any practical way however.

[55] *ICUR* I. 816, 116; *LTUR* I. 206-7.

[56] See 'Titulus Sanctae Caeciliae' in Chapter 6.

[57] *FUR* pl.35; *CIL* VI.1703; see Chapter 3 '*Titulus Priscae*'.

recently constructed.[58] There are about two or three churches that can claim an association with them. The imperial *thermae* themselves were seen by all the emperors as a propaganda tool to promote their name and to garner public support as part of justifying their rise to the purple. Indeed there appears to be a pattern with the construction of these buildings coinciding with the arrival of a new regime or at the end of a civil war.[59] Their creation did not stop with the advent of a Christian administration from Constantine. He built baths in Rome on the Quirinal and in his new capital Constantinople for example.[60] The imperial baths at Rome were still in working order until the siege by the Goth Vitiges in 537-8 when the aqueducts were finally cut along with their water supply.[61] In this way, Christian foundations before this time can be argued to have utilised these baths in some form or another for their own purposes. However, it may be too simplistic to say these baths no longer worked after the sixth century, as there is evidence to suggest there were problems with the water supply, to the Baths of Caracalla at least, before this, and the baths continued to function. Furthermore, finds within the same baths imply that they remained in use into the early middle ages, as we will see. In any case, the Gothic damage would have been easy to repair.[62]

The first possible example of a relationship between imperial *thermae* and a Christian building is SS. Nereo ed Achilleo, founded and first known as the *Titulus Fasciolae* up to 595 at the latest, but is believed to date from 377 or earlier. As such, it may be another Damasian foundation, but there is no direct evidence for this.[63] The existing Carolingian construction is not thought to be on the same site as the fourth century church. There is no real archaeological evidence for such under the present basilica, and the *Liber Pontificalis* states that the rebuilding under Leo III in the ninth century was on a more elevated site than the original basilica. The Leonine church seems to have been built on a podium to protect it from flooding, a problem therefore for the original basilica perhaps, which seems to have been in ruins by this time.[64] If however the fourth century church was in ruins, it may have been completely

[58] Completed c.110, 216 and 305/6 respectively.
[59] Fagan, *Bathing*, p.123.
[60] He enlarged the Baths of Zeuxippus near the hippodrome in Constantinople.
[61] Procopius, *De Bello Goth.* I.19.
[62] DeLaine J., 'Recent Research on Roman Baths', *JRA* 1 (1988), I. 21-2.
[63] *CBCR*, III.135; *ICUR* I.124 n. 262; 499- *tituli Fasciolae- MGH.AA* XII. 413; 595- *Titulus SS. Nerei e Achillei.-MGH. Ep.* I. 367; Pietri, *RC*, I.466; Curran, *Pagan City*, p.145.
[64] *CBCR*, III.148; Pietri, *RC*, pp.466-7; *LP*, II.33; *LTUR* II.241.

demolished by Leo before any rebuilding took place so leaving no evidence, and the more elevated site mentioned could just be referring to the podium under the new church. Whether the first basilica was under the present one or just to the east or north of it, the whole area is clearly one not ideal for such a building with this tendency to flood.[65] Why such a location was chosen seems strange unless alternative motives were at work. The Carolingian construction lies almost opposite the entrance to the Caracallan baths; they are only around 30 metres away. **(Fig.5i & see Fig.2i)** By that point the baths were partly ruined and being looted, some of which for the church.[66] If of course the fourth century building was only even in the approximate area, the case for it having an intimate spatial and visual connection with these baths, and for the bathers going in, is virtually certain. Nevertheless, the Christian presence did not seem to have stopped these bathers going altogether, here or elsewhere, although this was probably not the intention.[67]

Built just opposite SS. Nereo ed Achilleo to its north on the other side of the *via Appia* is S. Sisto Vecchio, founded as the *Basilica Crescentiana* by Pope Anastasius I (399-401). **(see Figs.2i & j)** It was reconstructed under Sixtus III, from whom it gained its name *titulus sancti Sixti* by the sixth century.[68] To have founded this establishment so near to the *titulus Fasciolae*, and so soon after that church was created, may suggest an intentional relationship between the two. This could have been the similar utilisation of a room, or rooms, of the Caracallan baths for baptismal and other liturgical purposes. The discovery of Theodosian brick stamps in these baths may be a sign of the modifications that took place as part of this change in function. Perhaps the addition of small pools to various rooms in a late phase was more about this new baptismal use, rather than a sign of a degradation in the water-supply, as it has been argued?[69]

Alternative explanations for the two churches' location include that they were on the main thoroughfare on entering Rome from the south, that is the Via Appia. They could have been created then to be the churches for visitors to the city, or to gain more worshippers by being situated on such a busy road.[70] Also, they may have been an early

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[65] Curran, *Pagan City*, p.145;*CBCR*, III.148; *LTUR* III.343-4.
[66] *CBCR*. III.143.
[67] Procopius, *De Bello Gothico*, I.20.5; late restoration of baths- *CIL*, XV 1665.3, 4, 1669.7; *CIL* VI 1750.
[68] *LP* I.218; *CBCR*. IV. 163-77; *LTUR* I.325, IV.330; its current name is after the 3rd-century martyred Pope Sixtus II whose relics were moved here in the ninth century. For the problems with the name & dating see *CBCR*. IV. 174-5.
[69] DeLaine J., 'Recent Research', I.22.
[70] The same argument has been put forward for the positioning of the Caracallan baths to get such customers (Fagan, *Bathing*, pp.118-9).

reminder to anyone entering the city on this road that Rome was now a Christian place. Similarly, the *titulus Fasciolae* has been said to be here because it lay on the spot where the *fasciola*, or small bandage, fell from St. Peter's wounds during his escape from prison, and so the place where presumably the relic was kept. This story, however, is an invention.[71] None of the other more plausible theories explain why it was built in front of the baths and not elsewhere on the road though.

The importance of the *via Appia* as a road is clear, but to pick this site outside the entrance to the Caracallan baths for not one, but two, churches requires another explanation. This seems to be the utilitarian reasoning I have described, but also perhaps with the added benefit of being the church for the exiting and entering Christian customers at the baths, and so attracting more worshippers. The baths' popularity may have led to the need, or desire, to build the *Basilica Crescentiana* so soon after the first foundation. A potential, albeit perhaps ancillary, reasoning is the reminder these churches would have given the bathers of the potential dangers therein which the Christian writers, as we have described, denounced. Nevertheless, it was these churches' use of the baths for the liturgical ceremonies discussed, that provides I think the most likely and important motivation for their position in the city. Perhaps these two foundations were intended to be baptismal centres in this early period.

By the sixth and seventh centuries this initial ceremonial use for the baths seems to have evolved into a more philanthropic arrangement. The sixth and seventh century AD burials found in the outer precinct of the Caracallan baths have been argued to be associated with the church of SS. Nereo ed Achilleo, which became a *diaconia* from the seventh century. Perhaps it used a part of the baths for the bathing of the poor, in the same way that it had, or still, utilised these facilities for liturgical purposes.[72] This suggests there was a continuity of use for these baths by Christian groups, from the fourth to the seventh century at least. The appearance of a *xenodochium* in the area in the sixth century may also be connected to this complex,[73] this whole area being utilised as a place of refuge for the poor, sick and pilgrims because of its location on a main thoroughfare into the city and its position next to the remaining facilities of the

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[71] The account, which is fifth or sixth century, describes Peter 's bandage dropping *apud sepem in via nova: cumque venisset ad portam Appiam...*(*AA.SS.*Julii I.304). Neither the *via Nova* nor the *Porta Appia* existed in the first century AD. In any case, even if such a relic did reside in the church it would hardly have been superseded by the remains of two local martyrs.

[72] Cecchini M.G., 'Terme di Caracalla. Campagna di scavo 1982/83 lungo il lato orientale' in Bietti Sestieri A.M. et al (eds.), *Roma: archeologia nel centro* (vol. II), pp. 592-3.

[73] Gregory, *Ep.* I.44; *LTUR* V.43.

Caracallan baths. In this way, the two churches initial use of part of the baths as full immersion baptismal areas became, therefore, by the early middle ages, a place where the baths were utilised for Christian benevolence and as a stopping-off point for pilgrims. It is difficult to say whether these two churches were built opposite the Baths of Caracalla primarily for liturgical usage, or, as we have described in an earlier chapter, chiefly due to their position at an ideal resting place on a major pilgrim route out of the city. Whatever the case, the *Titulus Fasciolae* and *Basilica Crescentiana* used, and were intimately connected with, the large imperial baths located just yards from their doors.

The final and best example of an intimate correlation between a church and an imperial bath complex is between S. Cyriacus, known as *in Thermis*, and the Baths of Diocletian. It was constructed before 499, known by its presence on the signatures of presbyters for the synod of that year. Beyond this nothing is known of its foundation. The church no longer survives, but the best evidence for its position shows it within what was the baths' precinct between the main building itself and the north-east corner of the outer boundary wall.[74] Even more interestingly, this means that the church had to have been built *ex novo*, so was not an adaptation of an existing building, and was on public imperial land of course. There seems to be no record of the imperial permission required – as with the possibly similar example of S. Lorenzo in Lucina built onto the *horologium Augusti* – which may have given rise to an unlikely foundation myth for this church. This describes a Cyriacus miraculously curing the emperor Diocletian's daughter who is then given a house *iuxta thermas Diocletianas* as a reward, which becomes a meeting place for Christians.[75] Whatever the truth behind the foundation, we must presume the Church gained the permission to build here, which shows by implication imperial support for such a development, and indicates a post-Constantinian date. The *terminus ante quem* for its construction, 499, suggests a close connection between the church and the working baths for at least thirty-eight years.

This is then the most obvious example of the topographical and practical relationship between a church and a bath building. S. Cyriacus was the natural extension and evolution of that partnership. Whether deliberate or not, this case was also the most

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[74] *MGH.AA* XII. 412, *LTUR*. I.338-9, *CBCR*. 114-5. Renaissance sketches and drawings show a small oratory inside the baths' walls eg. Du Perac (Frutaz A.P., *Le Piante di Roma,* II. tav. 254) **(Fig.5j)**. A similar example, as mentioned above, may be the church of S.Felicita *in Thermis* beneath the Baths of Trajan - see n.54.

[75] *CBCR* I.114; *LTUR* I.338-9; *AA.SS.* Mai II. 619; imperial permission for extension of S. Lorenzo in Lucina, or perhaps S. Lorenzo fuori la mura, under Sixtus III- *LP* I.234 (see chapter 3, n.22).

blatant indication at that time of the Christian authorities integrating themselves with the social life of the city. In the same manner as the other church/bath examples, it provided a reminder to the Christian bathers of their behaviour there, and Christianised the bathing experience. The Church knew it could not stop most people going to the baths every day, just as they could not stop them going to the circus or theatre, but in this environment that largely lacked pagan elements, it could impose itself on the landscape and influence behaviour. Again, whether this was the primary intention or whether it was the more likely practical one we cannot say, but with S. Cyriacus we could argue some attempt to influence behaviour was at least an added benefit that was consciously considered. Equally, for the non-Christian bathers at Diocletian's baths this church was a sign as to who was now in charge of the social as well as the religious fabric of Rome. This church was a statement.

5.3. Conclusion

The bathing establishments of Rome were essentially non-religious places of leisure and hygiene prior to the fourth century. After this, many churches were built within and near them. It is most likely this was for practical purposes in order to use their facilities for liturgical ceremonies such as baptism, before purpose-built baptisteries were created for many of the churches in the city. The use of wells or springs for such ceremonies would no longer have been appropriate for a now imperially sanctioned religion. It may also have been a hope that the use of a formal, if not luxurious, setting for a key Christian ceremony like baptism would legitimise Christianity and encourage more people to be interested in converting, and see it as less of a persecuted minority religion favoured only by society's outsiders. The creation of baptisteries from the fifth century was the natural evolution of this process, the use of pre-existing *balnea* and *thermae* being the immediate short-term solution. It seems that once these baptisteries appeared, the ancient baths began to be used for the poor, pilgrims, and the clergy.

The views and opinions of the Christian writers from the second to the seventh century AD did not, it appear, impact on the choices made by the Christian builders of Rome, many of whom were the bishops of the city. The practical advantages provided by the baths overrode any moral concerns. It is not clear whether the similar opinions of

non-Christian writers on the subject affected the choices made by the 'pagan' elite and emperors for the locations of any temples and shrines. Most of the temple-building programmes of the city pre-dated the larger imperial baths so we cannot say for sure, but no new projects were commissioned and the smaller private *balnea* appear to have been largely secular spaces. In any case, the baths were one of the few essentially non-religious environments in the city. For the Christian builders of the fourth and fifth centuries this is something they wanted to take advantage of and change for their own pragmatic purposes. Equally, the popularity of the large imperial *thermae* was something that would also benefit a church built nearby.

These were churches that used the baths and were the churches for the bathers, a sign perhaps that the Roman ecclesiastical authorities also recognised the habits of the populace of the city, and could use those habits in order to further Christianise Rome and its population.

6. *Churches and Martyrs*: Genuine Historical Reasoning Behind Church Placement

To serve as a contrast to the previous chapters this section will examine the phenomenon of the churches whose locations *were* determined by historical factors, that is, those built on a martyr's burial site. I have argued throughout that the location of the Christian foundations of the fourth and fifth centuries within the city were not determined by the existence of a previous *domus ecclesiae*, very rarely by private land grants, and, as we shall see here, nor by the site or the location of a martyrdom. Rather, in many cases I believe, their location was based on more practical or strategic considerations that would encourage the Christianisation of the city, the Church's ultimate goal at that time. The motives I reject as the reasons given for the sites of the intramural churches were, I contend, later invented or falsely believed stories that improved the prestige of the building in question and created a history of continuity and legitimacy that the Roman Church wished to promote. This chapter seeks to further this argument by looking at the 'martyr churches' both inside and outside the city walls and comparing the two. It will be shown that the only genuine, justifiable and provable historical reasoning behind a church's location is that there was a martyr's burial on the site. Most of the foundations within the city that claim a martyrological heritage profess to be on the site of a death rather than a grave. By comparing the two we can see that using the place of a martyrdom as a reason behind church placement is not justified and a later invention. The key piece of evidence that vindicates such an interpretation for me is the absence of an epigram by Damasus, or any other fourth century commemoration. Damasus' verses were part of that bishop's programme to formalise and popularise the martyr cults of the city, and as such most of the extramural martyr churches have remains of one. What is crucial for my argument is that such epigrams, or any other contemporary evidence, is completely lacking in those intramural churches that claim to be built on the site of a martyrdom. Such an oversight by Damasus or others not to commemorate such events seems extraordinary if such stories were credible and believed in the fourth century. As a result, I contend that this proves that these stories were a later fabrication and that other motives were at work when these churches were built. Further, it seems Damasus' interest in publicising an earlier Christian history did

not extend to commemorating the *domus ecclesiae* either, surely an obvious case for promotion. There is no evidence for any such remembrance in any of the fourth or fifth century churches of Rome, so this also appears to indicate that such a history was a fiction.

It is clear, however, that such a statement is relative. That is, for the sixth century and later Christian these martyr stories were probably part of some sort of tradition, and as such were, for them, true accounts the lives of Christian heroes. The question for us is how old were these traditions and how genuine were they? As we have said, there is no physical evidence for the martyrdom stories in the city of Rome, but we cannot prove with certainty there was not a literary or oral tradition that justified the later monumentalisation of these sites, although the lack of fourth century commemoration of some sort suggests not. Equally, we cannot be absolutely certain these martyrdom traditions are false, but their late commemoration and first formal written appearance again suggests they are at least partly inventions. Delehaye, in the early twentieth century, was highly sceptical of these works, and was the first to provide what was in effect a literary critique of them. He argued the hagiographer's reliance on memories and oral traditions, as well as their inconsistent content, means most cannot be seriously treated as factual history.[1] This is now universally accepted, and factors such as the importance of biblical themes, the conveyance of a moral message and plain invention in hagiographic production are now recognised. They tell us more about the time in which they were written than they do about the saint's actual life.[2] The stories of martyrs' lives and deaths have also been seen as important stylistic bridges between Classical and Medieval narratives, an approach which also disregards them as historical pieces.[3] I naturally agree with these analyses. They do not allow for a coherent historical basis for many of the saints' lives, and as we will see for Rome, their *passiones* cannot be verified by any epigraphic or archaeological evidence prior to the sixth century when they were written. We can verify a pre-Constantinian and fourth century tradition for the sanctification of the burial place of the martyr, which is repeated in their written passions, but this is not shared for places of martyrdom within Rome.

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[1] Delehaye H., *Les légendes hagiographiques*; Idem, *Cinq leçons sur la méthode hagiographique.*
[2] Eg. Coon L., *Sacred Fictions: Holy Women and Hagiography in Late Antiquity*; Leyser C., '"A Church in the House of the Saints": Property and Power in the Passion of John and Paul' in *Religion, Dynasty and Patronage in Early Christian Rome, 300-900*, pp.140-62.
[3] Elliott A.G., *Roads to Paradise: Reading the Lives of the Early Saints.*

It needs to be said that the job of the hagiographer was not to provide a well researched impartial historical account of a saint's life and death, and we should not expect this to be so. His job was to glorify and excite a Christian audience and provide a heroic and moral story. We should not believe the stories were entirely invented either, however, as many no doubt had several kernels of truth. Nevertheless, these elements of truth, as far as the Roman legends were concerned, can be found in the place of the saint's burial but not in their place of death, which was not assiduously recorded. It is the lack of any evidence for a *tradition* older than the 'martyrdom church' that is key here, and it is the evidence that backs this up. In many ways it is not important whether that tradition is true or not, merely that one existed. The evidence implies that it did not.

In this way, these 'martyrdom churches' within the city can be seen as opportunistic foundations with ulterior motives within an atmosphere of martyr fever in the sixth century. In contrast, the 'tomb churches' can be viewed more sympathetically because of the fourth century and earlier commemoration that existed within and around them.

I will begin my analysis by looking at some of the main examples of churches that were built on tombs, to show how the martyr's remains, and believed grave, were central to that church and its running. Most of these lay outside the city walls, but there is one exception, so this is not a simple intra/extramural issue. These basilicas show the desire by the early Church to encourage or create a history that provided it with legitimacy, and an income. The placement of many Christian centres inside the city on the same roads as those burial or tomb churches outside the walls, as we have discussed, served to Christianise these thoroughfares, albeit perhaps unintentionally. These two phenomena therefore worked together and provided the pilgrim and devotee with what they needed, all of which exhibited clearly the increasing Christianisation of the city.

The fact that such historical promotion does not seem to have been implemented for the 'martyrdom churches' until the fifth or sixth century, at the same time as the appearance of the martyr legends and the increasing popularity of their cults, is revealing. The active promotion of the idea of an earlier Christian tradition, and a sense of continuity being formalised materially using architectural means, was obviously and clearly promoted in the tomb basilicas from the fourth century. This therefore contrasts with the comparative absence of this for the martyrdom churches inside the city for another two centuries. To properly convey this point we will examine six of the main

tomb basilicas as well as looking at the six Christian centres that claim to be built on the site of a martyrdom.

6.1. The Tomb Churches

With the following examples three main patterns emerge. Firstly they are all focused on the burial place of a martyr. Secondly, this is demonstrated in the fourth and fifth century by either a small martyrium or basilica over the tomb itself with a large mausoleum for elite burials nearby, or by just a basilica built over the tomb. The burial places of the martyrs Agnes, Lawrence, Marcellinus and Peter come under the first category, those of the apostles Peter and Paul and the martyrs John and Paul the latter. The third and most important common feature for us is that they all contain fourth century evidence for the respective martyr cult being there at that time. This comes in the form of either an epigram or verse by Damasus, describing the martyr, their life and that they were buried there, or other archaeological evidence proving the same. Often both forms of evidence are present. They confirm that there was a belief at least, that the body of the saint was buried at the specified tomb in the fourth century. These discoveries also imply, in some cases, the knowledge of this burial, along with Christian devotion of the site, went back a further century or more. The claims of many of these basilicas can also be backed up by written evidence.

6.1.1. Basilica Sanctae Agnetis

The basilica lies on the *via Nomentana* about a mile outside the walls. It was thought to have been founded by Constantine at the request of his daughter Constantina, but this foundation is now thought to be that of S. Costanza, built about fifty metres to the south-west of the church of S. Agnes and her tomb.[4] Some sort of structure in the area was certainly in place by 354, and in 358 under bishop Liberius, as he lived, on his return from exile, *in cymiterio Sanctae Agnae*, which appears to have been on land

[4] *LP* I.180; *ICUR* II.44. The basilica was more likely founded under Constantius II between 337-49- *CBCR* I. 34-5 cf. *LTS* I.34.

owned by Constantina.[5] The embellishment of the martyr's tomb by Liberius, an epigram by Damasus, and writings from Ambrose and Prudentius, confirm the fourth century belief at least, that the martyr Agnes was buried on the spot where the current church lies. They also indicate that some sort of memorial existed over the tomb of the martyr itself in the fourth century.[6] The area around and over the tomb seems to have become a basilical church in the early fifth century with Innocent I roofing and decorating this feature, implying a simple open air martyrium existed on the site before this. Easter baptism was celebrated here by Boniface (418-22). It was restored in the late fifth or early sixth centuries, which is supported by archaeology.[7] From the remains we have, this structure was a thin single naved building with an apse, which was surrounded by smaller chapels. Its nave level was six metres below that of the *via Nomentana*, and is 0.65 metres below the current floor. Therefore, like the existing basilica, at least half of the building was sunk into the hill with only the upper half being visible above ground, this part being therefore studded with windows for light.[8]

The existing structure is a rare seventh century construction by Honorius I (625-38), within which only a few parts of the fifth century building remain. **(Fig.6a)** Its upper level, the only part above ground level, is now marked by a gallery around the tomb. **(Fig.6b)** It is unlikely this existed in the fifth century structure however, it being a Byzantine feature reflecting the seventh century origin of the Honorian basilica and the increasing popularity of the cult of Agnes.[9] In any case, the original church floor, as today, links directly with that of the catacomb and the tomb of the martyr, originally accessed via some stairs in the apse. **(Fig.6c)** Because the *via Nomentana* lies so far above the nave floor, access to the church was probably through a door or descending stairway in the south wall, this side being the only one not enclosed by the hill. This stairway was probably monumentalised by Symmachus (498-514) and still descends down to the church entrance. **(Fig.6d)** It was probably designed as a link between the

[5] *Depositio Martyrium* (AD 354) in *MGH.AA.* IX.71; *LP* I.207; Constantina probably buried here- Amm. Marc. XIV.11.6, XXI.1.5.
[6] *LP* I. 208; Ferrua (ed.), *Epig. Dam.* no.37; Ambrose, *De Virg.* 1.2.5-9; Prud. *Perist.* XIV. 1-6. As well as the martyr burial lists of the fourth and fifth century; *Dep. Mart.* – see n.5; *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (early 5th century) in *AA.SS.* Nov. II.2.52-3. Also *Coll. Avell.* 1 (*Libellus Precum*) written in the late 4th century, implies a significant structure or embellishments.
[7] *LP* I. 222, 227, 263; *LTS* I.35.
[8] *CBCR* I. 30-4.
[9] Or equally a local pragmatic solution to having to cater for the increasingly large numbers of pilgrims visiting the tomb-H. Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches of Rome*, p.241.

large funerary hall built by Constantina, and the more modest church, at that time, over the martyr's remains.[10]

Thus, it is possible to say, that from the early fifth century a basilica was built over the already embellished resting place of St. Agnes, this being a modest structure until the intervention by Honorius I. A large funerary hall or basilical mausoleum was built next to the site as early as the mid-fourth century for the purpose of allowing members of the imperial family to be buried near the revered martyr. As such, all the buildings on this site are here because it was believed that Agnes was buried in a specific tomb in this particular catacomb along the *via Nomentana*. In many ways, for our purposes, only this belief is important rather than there being any actual facts behind it.

This belief was certainly in place by the fourth century, as we have described, and is confirmed by the epigram of Damasus, presumably originally located near to the tomb of the martyr but found re-used in the pavement of the Honorian basilica. It describes the young Agnes dying cruelly by fire, emphasising her youth and Damasus' own devotion to her.[11] The contemporary accounts of Agnes' martyrdom, in Prudentius and Ambrose, suggest an alternative version where she was exposed and humiliated in a brothel before her death and then beheaded rather than being burnt.[12] The omission of Agnes' apparent suffering in a brothel by Damasus in his epigram was probably due to its inappropriateness for a location near her tomb, or the story's dubious reliability. The importance of this particular part of Agnes' *passio* will be examined in more detail when we look at a church dedicated to Agnes inside the walls of Rome. It will suffice to say for now, the existence of a Damasian verse to the martyr near her tomb means the belief that she was buried there dates from at least the fourth century and was not a later invention.

6.1.2. Basilica Maior Sancti Laurentii

A basilica dedicated to Lawrence on the *via Tiburtina* is described as being in existence under Constantine, and the *LP* confirms that under Sylvester (314-35)

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[10] *LTS* I. 35.
[11] Ferrua (ed.), *Epig. Dam.* no.37. Another inscription or verse of Damasus' seems to have also existed in the area- *op cit.* no. 38.
[12] See n.6.

Constantine built one here, dedicated to the saint *supra arenario cryptum.*[13] A festival to Lawrence took place in this area certainly by the mid-fourth century, so whatever had been built was already the focus for celebrations and of sufficient size to cope with the numbers of people.[14] Like S. Agnese at the same time, the site consisted of a small embellishment in and around the actual tomb. This is described as a decoration of the tomb itself and the creation of some stairs leading down to the entrance to the catacomb with a silver grating covering this, with silver railings around the periphery. An apse was also built.[15] The specific location of these additions is unclear from the text however, but we can assume they are connected to the U-shaped ambulatory basilica to the south of the tomb, that is regarded as Constantinian. In any case, some sort of visible decoration was in place within the tomb of Lawrence itself, including an altar by Damasus' day, and at the entrance to the catacombs from Constantine onwards.[16] By the turn of the fifth century there appears to have been an altar perhaps above the tomb, and we hear of a building around it that was sufficiently old and large to warrant a restoration during the same period.[17] This may be a reference to the Constantinian mausolea nearby however, but Prudentius refers to an *aedes* and *aula* of Lawrence, perhaps implying that the embellished shrine was housed within this hall. This was presumably not large or elaborate enough to warrant the term *basilica*, possibly because it may not have had a nave and aisles.[18] Sixtus III (432-440) appears to remodel the area around and over the tomb, with the altar and *confessio* of Lawrence being changed and porphyry columns being added to the area.[19] The church today includes, in what is now called the east basilica, the construction by Pelagius II (579-90), the apse of which was removed and incorporated into the thirteenth century foundation by Honorius III (1216-

[13] Euseb. *VC.* 4.58; *LP* I. 181- that is above the entrance to the catacombs where Lawrence's body lay, rather than over his actual tomb.
[14] *Dep. Mart.- MGH.AA.*IX. 72; *Mart. Hier. -AA.SS.Nov.* II.2. 431-2. For the relationship between the site and the city see Brandt O. 'Inside or Outside? The Relationship between the Sanctuary of Laurentius and Rome' in Bjur H. & Santillo Frizell B. (eds.),*Via Tiburtina. Space, Movement and Artefacts in the Urban Landscape*, (2005), pp.26-30.
[15] *LP.* I.181.
[16] Ferrua (ed.), *Epig. Dam.* 33.
[17] Gerontius, *Vita S. Melaniae Junioris*, 5-6. In the Greek version of the story it describes Melania's husband going near an altar, the latin version however describes him *prosternens se sub altare* implying it lay on top of Lawrence's tomb- see Laurence P., *La vie latine de sainte Mélanie*, p.130; *ICUR* II. 155 .
[18] Prud. *Persist.* II. 527, 551.
[19] *LP* I. 233. Cf. Geertman H., 'The Builders of the *Basilica Maior* in Rome' in de Blaauw S. (ed.), *Hic Fecit Baslicam*, pp.1-16 which argues for Sixtus III, in fact, building the ambulatory basilica, thereby embellishing a site formerly occupied only with the Constantinian features in or around Lawrence's tomb.

1227).[20] **(Fig.6e)** As with S. Agnese, the tomb of the martyr can be accessed from the nave floor via a flight of stairs to an indented *confessio*. After the Pelagian construction was built such access was denied to most, and was limited to visual appreciation from the balcony. This feature is Byzantine, but its existence was not necessarily due to Eastern influence, but rather because of the practicality of having to accommodate large numbers of pilgrims.[21] This balcony is of course another element shared with S. Agnese.

We can see that, certainly from the fourth century, there was an extensive and deliberate decoration of the believed site of Lawrence's burial, in order to encourage and formalise the veneration of the saint. It seems that a formal basilica over the spot was not constructed until the sixth century however, but there was a large mausoleum for elite burials near to the site of Lawrence's tomb from the Constantinian era. There seems to have been a simple hall or shrine over the tomb of the martyr itself from the early fifth century. Thus the hill containing the catacomb was dug out at this time, with the Pelagian basilica being an enlargement and formalisation of the fifth century structure in order to accommodate the increasing number of pilgrims coming to see the martyr's resting place. Consequently, from the fifth century, there was a visible reminder, above ground, of Lawrence's burial site, and within the catacomb itself from the time of Constantine. The ambulatory basilica of Constantine did however mark the entrance to the catacomb from that period.

Whether this site was genuinely the place of Lawrence's burial is almost irrelevant. More important for us is that it was *believed* to be. This was probably the case before the fourth century, as Constantine must have been informed of a tradition for the tomb's existence here. Such knowledge may have been passed down from the time of Lawrence's martyrdom itself, said to have been under Valerian in 258.[22] Nevertheless, the belief, from an early period, that the saint was buried here is confirmed by the embellishments of Constantine and others in and around the tomb and catacomb, and eventually directly over the burial site. The tradition is also confirmed by the early credence given to the story of his burial here by Constantine and Damasus. We hear from the *LP* that what appear to be pictorial depictions of his passion were placed

[20] *LP* I. 309; *ICUR* II. 63, 106, 157- the previous basilica, judging from these inscriptions, seems to have been quite dark suggesting an *aula* with small windows; *LTS* III.203-11.
[21] Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, p.237.
[22] *LP* I. 155.

in front of Lawrence's body by Constantine, under the direction of bishop Sylvester no doubt, and near to where Damasus later placed an epigram dedicated to the martyr.[23] The wording implies where this was situated, as it describes an altar dedicated to Lawrence, suggesting the verse was situated nearby. It describes Lawrence's martyrdom in terms of blows by executioners, fire, torture and chains. A second epigram to Lawrence, found near to the current church, also emphasises fire as the essential element of Lawrence's martyrdom.[24] This, once more, shows the motivation behind the Constantinian basilica, and the minor and then major embellishments around the tomb of the martyr. This all indicates that the site was believed to be Lawrence's burial place from an early date, and was not a later fiction. Even by the fourth century, and certainly by the sixth century, the account of his actual martyrdom seems to have been embellished, with the story of Lawrence's elaborate torture, so this element may be an invention. This issue will be tackled later, in reference to the intramural church to St. Lawrence that claims to be situated on the site of this martyrdom.

6.1.3. Basilica Sancti Marcellini et Petri

Once more this foundation is said to have been built by Constantine, during the pontificate of Sylvester (314-35). It is described as being constructed on a site known as *inter duos lauros* in honour of the priest Marcellinus and the exorcist Peter, both martyred during the Diocletianic persecutions in the early fourth century.[25] At the same location, Constantine is also described as building a mausoleum where his mother Helena lay. There may also have been some sort of imperial palace or villa here from the late second century until at least the reign of Valentinian III (425-55), as well as a drill ground and cemetery for the *equites singulares*. The whole area is described as being at the third milestone outside the walls of the city.[26] The discovery of the third milestone marker near the mausoleum of Helena and its use of Constantinian bricks in the structure, as well as the finding of a coin of 324-6 in its mortar, confirms the date

[23] *LP* I. 181; Ferrua (ed.), *Epig. Dam.*33.
[24] Ferrua (ed.), *Epig. Dam.* 34.
[25] Although it may have really been first dedicated to the worship of martyrs in general- Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, p.59.
[26] *LP* I. 182- the *Mart. Hier.* however describes the location of the saints burials as four miles outside the walls but this is likely to be an error as the name given for the area is also *inter duos lauros* (*AA.SS.* Nov. II.2. 292-4); Prosper Tiro describes the emperor Valentinian III dying *ad duos lauros* – *MGH.AA.* IX. 303, 490.

given by the *LP* for this building.[27] The location and structure of the basilica built by Constantine had, however, until relatively recently remained unclear. The only survivals on the site today are the mausoleum and a small church dedicated to St. Tibertius, but investigations fifty years ago confirmed the existence of a large ambulatory basilica that was situated between the two. **(Fig.6f (i))** It was built over the cemetery of the *equites singulares*, who fought for Maxentius in the civil war, so we may have a similar situation to that of the Lateran, Constantine there building over their barracks.[28] Underground, the catacombs containing the *loculi* of the two martyrs also survive, which are now only accessible from the chapel of St. Tibertius whose own resting-place is thought to have been nearby.[29] The story of the martyrdom of the two saints, probably written some time in the fifth century, ties in quite well with this, describing their burial in the catacomb by two of Tiburtius' relatives close to his tomb and beneath an oratory built for him.[30] This chapel is thought to be the only survivor of the many mausolea that are believed to have encompassed the Constantinian basilica. Whether this mausoleum was actually built originally for Tiburtius or for the more famous Marcellinus and Peter is a moot point, but either way the structure would have been of early origin, probably fourth century, and is likely to have pre-dated the large basilica. The basilica is also thought to have replaced, and encompassed, an older rectangular precinct, built some time between 310-15, the basilica being constructed about the same time as the mausoleum, that is about ten years later. **(Fig.6f (ii))**Its use as a cemetery, for those who wished to be buried near the martyrs, is clear and explains the lack of any pavement remains inside.[31] It would have also provided a place for funerary meals and services for their feast day, as well as a visible marker of the approximate location of the two martyrs' tombs for pilgrims.

It seems unlikely that no monument above ground was specifically built to denote where exactly Marcellinus and Peter were buried, but it may have seemed sufficient to have the large basilica as evidence of the approximate area. The proximity of the outer wall of the Constantinian structure to the chapel/mausoleum, its apse end

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[27] *CBCR* II. 192, 194.
[28] *CBCR* II. 195, 197; Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, p. 55.
[29] The story of the theft of the relics of Marcellinus, Peter and Tiburtius in the ninth century confirms their accessibility and locations- Einhard, *Historia translatoris* in *AA.SS. Iun.* I. 181-4. The catacomb was also said to have housed the remains of the *quattro coronati* martyrs whose identification remains obscure. For the catacombs in general see *LTS* II. 209-15.
[30] *AA.SS.* Iun. I. 173.
[31] *CBCR* II. 197-200, 202-3. For the basilica in general see *LTS* IV.19-25.

touches the south-east corner of the chapel, meant no large church was able to be built but there could well have been direct access between the two buildings.[32] This is rather different to the complexes at S. Agnese and S. Lorenzo where the site of the martyr's burial lay at some distance from the funerary basilica. As such, a large church was able to be built over the site of their tombs, a scenario that would no doubt have been repeated for the martyrs Marcellinus and Peter but for the location of the Constantinian structure. This cemetery basilica was eventually abandoned and fell into disuse certainly by the medieval period, when another cemetery was created within the nave foundations. It could well have been the theft and removal of the relics of the martyrs on the site in 827 that presaged this, in spite of a possible attempt to revive the area in 855-8.[33]

The site of the tombs of Marcellinus and Peter themselves is obvious underground by the embellishments around them that have been found, added to the remains of Damasian epigrams in the area, that were originally situated near to the saints' remains.[34] The route of access to these remains before the eighth century is confused by a reference in the *LP* that refers to stairs that Hadrian I *noviter fecit.* This, apparently for the first time, gave access to the graves from the church of St. Tiburtius, which is the route taken by the tomb robbers of the ninth century.[35] We must assume then that a different route existed before this, possibly from the basilica, although the reason for the change is unclear.[36] In any case, a route must have been clearly marked down to their tombs for pilgrims before the eighth century. The Damasian verses describe how Damasus was told of the story of their martyrdom, when he was a boy, by their executioner who later converted, so we can assume the details are reliable, as is the location of their burial. Other fragments of high quality inscriptions from the same period were found in the vicinity, as well as others in the mausoleum of Helena.[37] Damasus reports that the martyrs were beheaded, after having to dig their own graves, in a thick wood outside the city so that their burial place would be unknown and unable

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[32] *CBCR* II. 198.
[33] *CBCR* II. 203; see n.29; site certainly active in seventh and eighth century- *LP.* I. 324, 500 and repairs in ninth century- *LP* II. 147 although this may refer to the church of the same name on the via Merulana inside the city.
[34] Ferrua (ed.), *Epig. Dam.* 28; *AA.SS.* Iun. 173.
[35] *LP* I. 500. Although this may have been just a new route to allow its enlargement to accommodate more pilgrims- Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, p. 59.
[36] Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, p.56.
[37] Ferrua (ed.), *Epig. Dam.* 28-30; *Mart. Hier.-AA.SS.* Nov. II.2. 292-4. *AA.SS.* Iun. I. 173 gives a more detailed location for their burial.

to be venerated. A Lucilla helped bury them. The *passio* of Marcellinus and Peter, probably written a century or more later, describes a similar version of events, where thorns were cleared from where they were killed, which is carried out by decapitation. A Lucilla and Firmina, described as relatives of St. Tiburtius, bury them next to him.[38]

All this shows that the writer of this passion probably got his evidence from the same source as Damasus, that is from the eye-witness account. This makes the *passio* of the martyrdom of Marcellinus and Peter rather exceptional, in that it virtually *proves* that the site of the later tomb embellishments and mausoleum above ground was the site of the martyrs' deaths, rather than just indicating a mid-fourth century *belief* that it was. In any case, the location for their burial was clearly not an invention of the fifth or sixth century, the existence of the epigram by Damasus, using eye-witness evidence, and the construction of the Constantinian basilica at the site, proves this. They indicate an early fourth century tradition that the martyrs lay here, the basilica being built very soon after their deaths.

The following two examples of tomb churches we will examine, St. Peter's and St. Paul's, come under a very different category from what we have seen so far. The previous three churches evolved from an arrangement of a large funerary ambulatory basilica placed next to a small structure or embellishment that marked the site of the martyr's burial, either above ground or within the catacomb itself. Both the basilicas *Sancti Pauli* and *Sancti Petri* began their lives in very different ways. Presumably because of the greater importance and fame of these martyrs, being apostles and therefore directly associated with Christ Himself, their churches were both significant structures from the beginning, and were initially built over the site of their respective burial places in the fourth century rather than later. Also, the apostle's burial places both lay in cemeteries above ground, not in catacombs. Interestingly, no funerary basilicas were built for the faithful to be buried nearby, which implies that the initiators in both projects saw them, perhaps, as more than just martyrs, but rather as direct intermediaries between man and God. Their presence and death in Rome also gave the Roman see a particular prestige and a justification to pursue its pre-eminence. The construction of these churches was no doubt encouraged, and suggested, by the bishop of Rome in

[38] *AA.SS.* Iun. 173.

order to emphasise this, as well as to acknowledge their importance to Christianity and to formally indicate the esteem the new religion was now held in within imperial circles.

6.1.4. Basilica Sancti Pauli

The basilica lies on the Via Ostiense which runs south from the city, between the road and the Tiber, and is situated about two kilometres from the Aurelianic walls and the *Porta Ostiensis*. The building of the church consists of two phases that concern us, the foundation before 384 by Constantine or one of his sons, and that of the Theodosian rebuilding, began in 384 or 386, by the emperors Theodosius I, Valentinian II and Arcadius. For the latter we have the original prescript that initiated the project. This basilica remained virtually unaltered, save for a few minor restorations over the centuries, until 1823, when a fire destroyed large parts of it.

The date of the building of the first church is much debated due to the fact that the passage in the *LP* that assigns its construction to Constantine, at the request of the bishop Sylvester, that is between 314-335, is suspect. Further, variant manuscripts describe Constantine II and Constantius as co-founders, meaning it was more likely founded between 337-40.[39] The only remains of this first church that survive are those of the apse, uncovered in the mid-nineteenth century. It indicates an east facing basilica that was probably, based on the size of the apse, about 8.5 by 12-17 metres or 12 by 21 metres.[40] **(Fig.6g)** Either way, it indicates a modest structure that was accessed from the main road of *via Ostiense*. More importantly, it was a structure that was centred on a mausoleum believed to contain the remains of St. Paul. This area, immediately before the first church's construction, consisted of a hill to the east of the Ostian Way that was covered with pagan mausolea from the first century BC to the fourth century AD. These continued along the road itself at this point. A small road branched off the main *via Ostiense* to the south of the later church and ran north-west. This *diverticulum* was also lined with pagan graves and eventually joined another minor thoroughfare that ran south-west from the main road. **(Fig.6h)** At the apex of the apse of the later first church there was found a sizeable shrine that was uncovered and examined in 1838, with only drawings from that time by Vespignani providing us with any evidence. **(Fig. 6i)** This

[39] *LP* I. 178 (n.71); *CBCR* V.97, 161.
[40] *CBCR* V. 149; Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, p.103; *LTS* IV.169-70.

shrine then would have stood within a large pagan cemetery and would have been about fifteen feet to the east of the diverticulum as it passed, and had many pagan mausolea surrounding it. Only the west and north faces of the shrine were brought to light, but its structure, position within the church, combined with surrounding epigraphic evidence, all make it certain that this was believed to be the shrine of the apostle Paul. The west face is dominated by a long grill that runs almost its entire length, and is assumed to be the way early pilgrims were able to observe the remains of the apostle without interfering with them. Their route to the shrine was along the *diverticulum* which passed in front of this west face. The shrine is presumably the *tropaion* of Paul described by a presbyter called Gaius around 200, although the dating of this shrine, or any that existed on the spot previously, is uncertain. The position of the first apse actually cut it off from the *diverticulum* and made the east face of the shrine the new line of approach, although it made access much easier, as it was now from the main road. Presumably this east side also had a similar grill for pilgrims, as the western face was now largely inaccessible, save for a few visitors at a time, due to their being less than two metres between it and the apse wall.[41] Interestingly, no Damasian epigram has been found at the site. A Damasian verse was found at San Sebastiano on the Via Appia however which mentions Paul, as well as Peter, and suggests some sort of cult or relic of one, or both, apostles remained there in the mid to late fourth century.[42] Yet there was no shortage of similar contemporary verses at St. Peter's, which seems to imply that either the Filocolean inscription at St. Paul's was lost before it could be recorded in the early middle ages, or that the centre for the cult of Paul was not here until the Theodosian reconstruction of the site in the 380s. No more evidence survives or has been uncovered of the first church, so we cannot say much more about this initial phase. Its apparent small size has caused much debate though, it being a church for an apostle but much smaller than the contemporary St. Peter's. This could have been the reason why the focus for the apostle's cult was not initially centred here. It is likely the marshy and flood-prone land in the vicinity, and the huge expense laid out for St. Peter's, may have been the reasons for its modest proportions.

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[41] *CBCR* V. 111-6, 118, 160-1; *LTS* IV.174-5; Euseb. *HE* II.25.6-7; it is likely the relics were removed from here in the 250s during a persecution for their safekeeping, and returned some time later, perhaps once the plans for the basilica were made? The same goes for the relics of St. Peter. For the current debate see Holloway R.R., *Constantine and Rome*, pp. 151-5.

[42] See n.52.

In any case, the Theodosian basilica that followed soon made up for this. The construction of this church was began in either 384 or 386, based on a prescript sent by the emperors Theodosius I, Valentinian II and Arcadius. The doubt as to the date comes down to a debate as to when Sallust, the Urban Prefect and receiver of the letter, was in office.[43] The detail and individuals mentioned in the letter have been dealt with in a previous chapter and are not relevant here. Suffice to say that a *basilica* is mentioned as already existing on this site, and an *iter vetus* behind the first church was renewed. This was the road running south-west from the *via Ostiensis* and joining the northern end of the *diverticulum*, described as the *praesens via* in the letter.[44] The church was completed between 395 and 402/3.[45]

This phase survives largely in the present structure, in spite of the devastating fire of 1823. What is important to note is that the new church was at least three times the size of the first basilica and was elaborately furnished and decorated in a clear attempt to rival or gain equality with St. Peter's. This new building also reversed the direction of the previous foundation. Now it faced west and away from the *via Ostiense*, which made it necessary to restore the 'old road' described in the letter above. This also allowed for a larger basilica whilst keeping the apostle's tomb at the apex of the apse, as there was more land available west of the shrine without the restriction of the road. **(Fig.6j)** It also allowed for more space around the shrine, restoring the original pre-Constantinian western approach and enabling more pilgrims to visit. This was of course one of the main intentions of the reconstruction alongside the increased importance it gave to the *doctor gentilium*. Two plaques were also found in the church that were originally joined and read PAVLO APOSTOLO MART. These were discovered below the High Altar, but are thought to have originally hung above the shrine.[46] They are believed to have been, in the first instance, a dedicatory inscription of late fourth or early fifth century date, perhaps as part of the Theodosian rebuilding, or set up by Leo I (440-61) as part of his reconstruction. Some time later they were placed over the shrine of the apostle itself, with two holes put in them so that pilgrims could pass pieces of cloth into the tomb and create *brandea*.[47] **(Fig.6k)**

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[43] *PLRE* I. Sallustius 4; Chastagnol A., 'Sur quelques documents relatifs à la basilique de Saint-Paul-hors-les-murs', *Melanges Piganiol*, (Paris, 1966), pp.424-7; *LTS* IV.170-1.
[44] *Coll. Avell.* 3.
[45] It was dedicated under Honorius (*ICUR* II. 81) who was bishop between 395-423, and Prudentius, writing in 402/3, describes its completion and interior (Prud. *Perist.* XII.45-54).
[46] Holloway, *Constantine and Rome*, p.85.
[47] *LP.* I. 239; *CBCR* V. 117, 162-3. For more detail on the Theodosian basilica see *CBCR* V. 150-3.

All this evidence combined shows that the two basilicas built on this site in the fourth century, in spite of the absence of a Damasian epigram, were clearly built for historical reasons. Their placement was in order to glorify and popularise the pre-existing shrine of Paul that lay, or was certainly believed to have lain, here. The tomb's position at the apex of both structure's apses, the surrounding epigraphic material and other ancient references to his resting place on the *via Ostiensis*, all demonstrate this.[48]

6.1.5. Basilica Sancti Petri in Vaticano

Perhaps the most well-known Christian foundation in Rome also provides us with much evidence for a genuine historical motivation behind the construction of a tomb church. A discussion of the buildings and structures that surrounded the tomb of the apostle and first bishop of Rome, Peter, has been dealt with in an earlier chapter. As such, our discussion will centre on the evidence here for Peter's pre-Constantinian burial within the Vatican hill cemetery, and the embellishment of the believed site of that inhumation from at least the second or third century, culminating in the basilica of Constantine or Constans.

The detailed archaeological reports surrounding the excavations of the 1940s in and around the tomb of the apostle are laid out in two main publications and others that will be cited. As a result, because of their complexity, I will merely outline the results of those investigations and the implications of their results for our survey here. The evidence that will be described indicates that the belief that the apostle Peter was believed to have been buried at what was later the apex of the basilica apse, was not a later invented tradition created for more earthly reasons, which hides the more prosaic motive for its placement, as we will see with the 'martyrdom churches'. Instead, it reveals the authentic conviction that St. Peter's was constructed on the Vatican Hill for legitimate historical reasons.

The excavations of sixty years ago revealed for the first time that St. Peter's was centred, at the apex of its apse, on a grave of the second century or before, that was embellished and honoured from that period until the fourth century. These investigations did not prove that the grave was that of the apostle Peter, but they did

[48] *Dep. Mart.* (entry dated to AD 258) in *MGH.AA.* IX.71; *Mart. Hier-* in *AA.SS.* Nov. II.2.342-3. Incidentally, there are no specific martyr acts for Paul or indeed Peter from the fifth or sixth century, presumably because they were apostles.

conclude that it was believed to be, or was at least an honoured site, from very soon after his death in approximately 64 or 67.[49] More recent research has put many of their conclusions in doubt however, and our reconstruction has to be more circumspect as a result.

The archaeologists worked east from the Clementine chapel directly behind the so-called Niche of the Pallia, which lies down some stairs in the current *confessio* of St. Peter's. The first object the excavators found was a large marble and porphyry casing surrounding the area directly underneath the existing altar, that lay on the level of the Constantinian, or Constantian basilica. **(Fig.6l)** This marble structure was thought to be the monument that Constantine or Constans had placed over the grave of the apostle in the fourth century.[50] Beyond this was found a wall covered in red plaster which is what the fourth century embellishment surrounded, a feature famously known as the Red Wall or Muro Rosso. It had been cut down when the grave was encased and so was a large distinctive feature of the area prior to the basilica being built. Further investigations north and south of the marble and porphyry structure at the fourth century level found evidence for columns surrounding the area, and so provided evidence for an elaborate Memoria surrounding the embellished grave site itself. **(Fig.6m)** Further examination of the Red Wall and remains further east, inside the 'Constantinian' monument, brought to light what was thought to be a long vertical niche within the other side of that wall. Beyond it there was also found a small column of white marble which was part of a wall running east from the Muro Rosso. Part of a horizontal travertine slab was discovered literally hovering above it, a space existing between it and the column shaft, the capital seemingly missing. **(Fig.6n)** This column rather than being part of the first Memoria over the grave on this site, which was the initial thought, is now believed to have been part of the next phase of its embellishment as spolia in a later wall. It is now thought rather that the first phase of the Memoria was simply an earlier wall running east from the Red Wall and a corresponding one on the other side of the niche, thus forming an alcove. The inside of this alcove was lined with marble. **(Fig. 6o)** In the next phase around the grave, along with the south wall and column, was a corresponding later wall built on the north side of the niche. On the outer side of this was scratched Christian graffiti which appeared to be of fourth century date, presumably

[49] The results and initial conclusions of these investigations were published by the excavators Apollonj-Ghetti, Ferrua, Josi & Kirschbaum- see n.51.
[50] *LP*. I. 176.

written before the construction of the marble monument around the grave and the formalisation of the veneration of the apostle after that point. This wall also had a marble lined recess on the inside towards the cavity where a mysterious box of bones was apparently found, said to be the relics of Peter.

The travertine slab that was found below the south column did not quite extend as far as the lower part of a similar column on the other side of the niche, which lay therefore in mid-air within the fill above a tomb cavity below. The southern edge of this lower slab was never observed. The reconstruction of the Memoria then, from the original archaeological investigations, is very hypothetical and uncertain.

The actual grave cavity itself was observed from its north side, and was a small space initially covered with a marble slab with an inscription of a Publius Aelius Isidorus, which had a hole in it towards the Red Wall. **(Fig.6p)** It has been said that this could not have been placed here until 'Constantinian' times because it belonged to a nearby tomb, but this may not necessarily be the case. Above this were further coverings, all with holes in the same places. This shaft down to the grave was lined with porphyry, and was no doubt used for *brandea*, perhaps only after the construction of the church. The wall on the other side of the cavity, the south side, is of two phases, but its use is unclear. On the east wall of the cavity, against the base of the Red Wall, was a hollow within which were found some bones. These bones however, rather than being the hoped relics of Peter were the remains of two men, a woman and various animals. Also the irregular nature of the base of the Red Wall was argued to be evidence for a burial that preceded the wall's construction, and thus an attempt to build around it, but later examination of the area shows this to be unlikely. On the floor of the cavity was found nearly one and a half thousand coins, only five of which dated to before 270 and only two before 268, suggestive of the site only being a frequent place of popular veneration after those dates. Either that or the practice of offering coins to the apostle for aid only began from that period. The Red Wall has been variously dated to before 160, to some time after it, or around 135. This then is argued to date the first Memoria on the site of the grave, now under the High Altar of St. Peter's, but this is not certain and depends more on the age of the niches in it over the grave, which cannot be dated

precisely. A fragment from the Red Wall did reveal a Greek inscription that mentions Peter, and may have read 'Peter is within'.[51]

The imprecise and incomplete nature of the evidence means we do not have a clear picture as to the time in which the grave here was first embellished. The accounts describing the translation of Peter and Paul's relics in the mid-third century can help us here however. The implications of this translation have been interpreted in a variety of ways,[52] but whatever version is believed, this site was a place of veneration for Peter from at least 270, as the coin evidence suggests and which the archaeological evidence does not disprove. As we have seen previously, the statement of the priest Gaius implies there was some sort of structure here by 200, and the date of the Red Wall of around 160 may provide us with a *terminus post* and *ante quem* for its initial construction. The martyrologies of the mid fourth and fifth centuries, the *LP*, as well as evidence from San Sebastiano, indicate that both Peter and Paul's remains were moved there in the mid-third century. Judging from the coins at the decorated grave on the Vatican though, they were returned to their original site within a generation.[53]

That is to say, the site at which the first church of St. Peter's was centred on was the believed spot of the apostle's grave from at least 270, and almost certainly before 200. Apart from the written and archaeological evidence we have for this, the high possibility that Peter was martyred in the Neronian persecutions in Rome, and therefore in the Circus completed by the same emperor located just yards from this grave site, also makes his burial, or believed burial here, very likely. Once more, with regards to a tomb church, historical reasoning behind its placement is provable and factual.

6.1.6. Titulus Pammachi/Sancti Iohannis et Pauli

This example is certainly one of the most fascinating in Rome due to the numerous and varied remains under the current church. They consist of various residential and commercial structures dating from the second to the fourth centuries AD,

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[51] Apollonj-Ghetti, B.M., A. Ferrua, E. Josi, E. Kirschbaum. *Esplorazioni sotto la confessione di San Pietro in Vaticano, eseguite negli anni 1940-1949*, passim; Ward-Perkins J.B. and J. Toynbee, *The Shrine of St. Peter and the Vatican Excavations*, passim; Prandi A., *La zona archeologica della Confessio Vaticana: I monumenti del II secolo*, passim; Holloway, R.R., *Constantine and Rome*, pp. 120-146; *CBCR* V. 165-279 – majority of the discussion centres on the Constantinian church; *LTS* IV.185-6

[52] They are laid out briefly in Holloway, *Constantine and Rome*, pp.152-5 including his own, more dubious, suggestion.

[53] *Dep. Mart.* (entry dated to AD 258) in *MGH.AA.* IX.71; *Mart. Hier.* in *AA.SS.* Nov. II.2.342-3; *Epig. Dam.* (ed. Ferrua), no.20; *LP.* I. 151; Holloway, *Constantine and Rome*, pp. 146-50.

with the church above being built in the early fifth century. More precisely, they comprise of the remains of three second century buildings, an *insula* built in the first half of the third century which faced onto the *clivus Scauri*, which still exits, and a *domus*, built around the same time, that was separated from the *insula* by a small alleyway. A room within the *insula*, known as the 'Aula dell'Orante' or Hall of the Worshipper, has been argued to be a Christian centre that dates from the third century, but the decoration can just as easily be described as pagan. Around the late third or early fourth century the whole area became a very large house, with the alleyway now separating the two wings of that house. **(Fig.6q)** From the mid to late fourth century this central alleyway feature seems to become the focus of Christian worship, with the creation of a *confessio* type structure with Christian figures and imagery on the landing on the stairs within it. **(Fig.6r (i))** Two of the rooms off the corridor were enlarged and modified with Christian paintings, and an internal entrance, presumably for worshippers, was also created. Not long after this the upper church, the majority of which survives today, was built in the early fifth century, with the *confessio* and other rooms acting then as a crypt. It appears they were still accessed until the twelfth century, with paintings of that period found within them, before they were filled in. The resting place of the martyrs was marked in the church by an altar, but now only a marble slab and a glass disk remain. In the sixteenth century remains of some bodies were seemingly found beneath this altar.[54]

When we look at this archaeological and written evidence, alongside the legendary stories surrounding the foundation of the church, we will see in this case the two seem to tally. The Martyrs Acts describe John and Paul being beheaded under the emperor Julian (360-3) and buried inside their house in a pit. Two priests, Crispus, Crispianus and a devout woman named Benedicta as well as their executioner Terence and his son, who were later converted, were killed by the emperor and also buried within the house. After Julian's death the acts describe a senator named Vizantius and his son Pammachius finding the bodies of the martyrs John and Paul and creating a church on the site.[55]

The first written evidence for the church comes under Innocent I (401-17), with a funerary inscription talking of two presbyters of the *titulus Vyzantis*, which ostensibly

[54] *LTUR* III.105-6; *CBCR* I. 265-300.
[55] *AA.SS.* Iun. V. 160.

tallies with the Vizantius of the Martyr Acts. An inscription of Leo I (440-61), which is described as being located at the church entrance when it was copied down, talks of this place being founded by a Pammachius. The church does not appear again until 499 when two presbyters of the *tituli Byzanti* and two from the *tituli Pammachi* appear as present at the Roman synod of that year. They are listed as separately as the other *tituli* in the list and from the text do not seem connected. Priests from a church of John and Paul are absent. However, under the same pontificate of Symmachus we hear that this bishop built some steps behind the apse of the church *ad beatum Johannem et Paulum.*[56] All this would suggest that the name of the church was interchangeable. By the time of the synod in 595, priests of the *titulus sancti Iohannis et Pauli* appear with the former *tituli* disappearing.[57] The connection between this church and the sixth century story surrounding the martyrdom and burial of John and Paul is thus clear.

The *passio* of these two individuals is however suspect on one major point. Why would the pagan Terence bury bodies *inside* the city walls, and moreover inside a house, instead of the usual practice of a burial outside the city, or simply dispose of the bodies there as befitted people regarded as criminals? Whatever the reliability of this, there does appear to be Christian imagery used within the house from about the mid-fourth century. Also, it seems to have been originally named after a *Vyzans* or *Byzans* or more likely a *Pammachius*, who seem to have been connected, to be later replaced by *Iohannes et Paulus*. The main source of evidence that could substantiate the claims made in the *passio* are the paintings found within the mid-fourth century *confessio*. Attempts have been made to assign the various figures depicted to the martyrs mentioned in the later stories, and such identifications do seem convincing. **(Fig.6r (ii))** For example, the decoration as a whole has been stylistically dated to the second half of the fourth century, which ties in with the alleged date of John and Paul's martyrdom and burial. Similarly, there are two figures represented either side of the small window that looks over a well-shaft, that leads up to the church above, and where human bones were allegedly found in the sixteenth century. It is certainly possible that these paintings represent John and Paul and that the bodies are their remains. The main central figure of the decoration, just below the window, could be Christ himself, and the two kneeling individuals at the main characters feet have also been identified with the martyrs. This is

[56] *ICUR* II. 150, 322, 440; *MGH. AA.* XII. 411-13; *LP* I. 262.
[57] *MGH.Ep.* I. 366-7.

a very unusual pose, however, for characters that were now believed to be glorified in heaven with Christ. The other figures in the room are also hard to identify precisely, but the scenes of martyrdom which are also depicted makes it likely they represent the other characters in the legend of St. John and Paul.

Further evidence for the potential veracity of the martyr story comes from the fact that the individual known as Pammachius that is described in the legend certainly existed at this time and is known to have been a wealthy Christian. He seems to have known Jerome and was his friend. He was also a large benefactor to the church after his wife's death. She was the daughter of the famous Paula, the ascetic widow to whom Jerome writes.[58]

This example then shows us very well that if a church was built for historical reasons some evidence would remain, as it does here, even within an intramural church. The lack of this in the other 'martyrdom churches' within the city is therefore significant I believe. This unusual intramural case indicates that a church could, even within the walls, be built on a particular site for historical motives, but only when that motivation was focused on the site of a martyr's grave. The fact that burials throughout antiquity took place outside the walls is the factor that makes this example unique. The lateness of the martyrdom, the mid fourth century, is no doubt the reason for this.

6.2. The Martyrdom Churches

We will now examine the other set of churches that claim to be founded for historical reasons. These are those Christian centres that profess to be situated on a site central to a martyr's life, usually the place of their martyrdom or eventual death, and are as such named after that individual. As with the foundations we have just looked at, we will first discuss briefly the history of the building itself from the official records and the archaeology. This will then be followed by the analysis of the story, that was written a century or more later in the Martyr Acts, that served to explain the life and death of the martyr in question to the Christian population. We will see that unlike the tomb basilicas, the martyrdom churches do not have a Damasian epigram or other fourth century or earlier evidence to back up the later assertion that their chosen location was

[58] *PLRE* I. Pammachius.

based on an historical episode. Such an important event, if it was believed or known at the time of the church's creation, would surely have been commemorated in some way in that church, especially by Damasus. These later stories then seem to be merely tales, in order to increase the prestige of the church in question, and of Rome itself as a long-standing centre of Christian faith.

This realisation will, I hope, serve to prove that it is only with the tomb churches that there is a genuine historical basis for location choice, and that the other Christian foundations of the fourth and early fifth centuries were in reality built for far more practical and evangelistic reasons. I will put forward my thesis for why such Christian commemoration only takes place for martyr burials at the end of the chapter.

6.2.1. Titulus Marcelli

The facts surrounding this church have been laid out in an earlier chapter, but deserve to be repeated for our purposes here. The church first appears in the written record in 418, when the Urban Prefect Symmachus writes to the emperor Honorius describing Boniface I (418-22) being ordained bishop there. The next time we hear of the church is through the presence of three of its presbyters at the synod at Rome in 499, and again in 595.[59] It is argued by some that this church, as well as all the other Christian centres of the period, acted as official meeting-places for the Roman clergy, as well as a place for worship.[60] The archaeology under the present sixteenth century S. Marcello al Corso, the assumed descendent of the paleochristian edifice, which lies next to the Via del Corso, known as the *via Lata* in late antiquity, suggests that the building may date from the late fourth century in fact. **(see Fig.2g)** The remains of a wall running east/west, corresponding to the north wall of the current church, are thought to date from that period up to the mid-fifth century, so any precise dating remains elusive, it not being mentioned in the *LP*. The first time it appears there was to describe its restoration under Hadrian I (772-95). Remains of the apse of this second church have also been found, showing that, interestingly, it originally faced away from the main road, as at the *titulus Marci* further down the *Lata*. A fourth or fifth century baptistery was also discovered to the north-east of the current church, which may have had some connection

[59] *Coll. Avell.* 14; *MGH.AA.* XII.413; *MGH.Ep.* I.367.
[60] *LTUR* III. 211- perhaps this was a conscious or unconscious continuation of the practice of the senate meeting in temples across the city as well as in the *curia* itself?

to the *statio I cohortis Vigilum* which lay nearby.[61] Either way, it would have lain by the entrance of the fourth or fifth century church, if that building was facing the same direction as its eighth century successor.

The only other sources for the origins of this church are within the Martyr Acts. The story involving the bishop of Rome Marcellus (296?-304/307-9?) is thought to date from the mid-sixth century, but is of dubious value. Another version of it also appears in the *LP,* which was also written about that time.[62] In them they talk of the first church on the site being founded by Marcellus in the house of a Lucina, a name that appears suspiciously often in many of these stories. The inclusion of the *catabulum* in these accounts, which is thought to have been in this area and connected to the public post, gives them an air of authenticity, but is more likely to have been a device merely to provide believability. This structure was probably still visible when the *passio* was written.[63] In any case, the stories put forward the assertion that the church exists here because of the foundation of a *titulus* in the house of Lucina on this spot, which is provided with greater fame by it being the place where one of the bishop's of Rome was martyred. In spite of the lack of archaeological evidence for this, and the variable nature of the three versions we have of this story, the martyrdom of Marcellus on this site is made more doubtful by another factor.[64] It is not in this case the absence of any epigraphic record of this event in the form of a Damasian epigram, but rather what that epigram does not say and where it was placed. A eulogy to Marcellus was written by Damasus, but within it there is no mention of how he died, a common epitaph seen in other epigrams. There are many references to the persecutions that occurred during his pontificate, and the verse implies that he died in them. No mention of the *catubulum*, stables, or any other aspects of the sixth century version of his death put this later story's reliability into serious doubt. Further, this epigram was not found in or near S. Marcellus but rather in the Basilica of San Silvestro in the Catacombs of Priscilla,

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[61] *LTUR*. III.211-2; *CBCR* II. 214-5; *LP* I. 509.

[62] For the possible dates of Marcellus' bishopric and controversies therein see *CBCR* II. 206 (n.1); *AA.SS.* Ian II. 9, 11-12; *LP* I. 164: These three slightly varying versions of Marcellus' death may or may not date from the same period but their variable nature suggests an oral unreliable origin.

[63] Especially if some recent research is to be believed that argues that the *catubulum* was restored in the mid-fifth century – Orlandi S., Panciera S., Virgili P., 'Attività edilizia monumentale nel centro di Roma nel V sec. d.c. A proposito di una nuova iscrizione del prefetto urbano Rufius Valerius Messala' in Ghilardi M., Goddard C. J., Porena P. (eds.), *Les Cités de l'italie tardo-antique (IVe–VIe siècle)*, pp.123-36.

[64] *LTUR* III. 212 notes the likely possibility that the story may also be confusing the *titulus Marcelli* with the *titulus Lucinae* just to the north or the *basilica Iulii iuxta forum Traiani* where Ursinus was elected bishop of the city.

where Marcellus was buried.[65] This shows again how fourth and fifth century Christianity was not interested in where a martyr was killed but where they were buried. In any case, the more likely explanation for the church's location, as argued earlier, is its position alongside the busy and highly accessible *via Lata*. **(see Fig.1a)** This road also led to the cemetery and basilica of Valentinus, built by Julius I (337-52).[66]

6.2.2. Titulus Sancti Callixti trans Tiberim

A similar amount of mystery and myth surrounds the foundation of this Christian centre, which is intimately connected with the *basilica Iulii*, later to become S. Maria in Trastevere. The *LP* says that bishop Callixtus (217-22) built this structure, but then the *Liber Pontificalis* tends to attribute any foundation that is named after a bishop to that individual, whatever the truth. The two are indeed mentioned together in the sixth century list of priests attending the synod of 595, but confusingly in 499, during a similar synod, only the *Iulii* is mentioned.[67] The sources seem to conclude quite conclusively however, that the *titulus Cal(l)isti* was the building that evolved into S. Maria. Nevertheless, the Liberian Catalogue describes Julius (337-52) building a basilica *iuxta Callistum*, yet his life in the *LP* does not mention such a place, which complicates matters.[68] It seems more likely that the two buildings were perhaps joined, and that the name of the whole building was interchangeable, being known as *Iulii*, *Callisti* or both. The likelihood is that the current S. Callisto is on the site of this complex, with the existing church of S. Maria being on a separate site. This is made more credible by the complete lack of paleochristian remains under the latter. **(see Fig.2f)**

The *Callistum* is thought by some to be a small pre-Constantinian Memoria to the martyr on the site of his death.[69] But it is more likely to have been a small hall built in honour of Callistus in the early fourth century, or simply the site of his third century grave, due to the dangers of raising a visible Christian Memoria in the city at that time. The story of his martyrdom on this site, I contend, was invented in the fifth or sixth

[65] *Epig. Dam.* (ed. Ferrua), no.40.
[66] *LP* I. 8, 205.
[67] *LP*. I. 62, 141; *MGH.AA*.XII, 411, 412, 414; *MGH.Ep*. I. 367.
[68] *LP*. I. 509, II. 9, 11, 16, 19, 26; *LP* I.9, 205; *Coll. Avell.* 1 (*Libellus Precum*). written in the late fourth century and mentions no *Callisti* when it mentions the *Iuli*.
[69] *LTUR* I.215 with other theories.

century to add a further layer of prestige and cachet to the spot.[70] This story talks of the bishop being thrown from the window of the house of a fellow Christian, Pontianus, which was *iuxta urbem Ravennatium*, into a well with a weight attached to his neck so that he would drown.[71] The remains of a well survive in the area today, and could be the reason for the origin of the story. In any case, no epigraphic memorial of the fourth century by Damasus, or any other archaeological material from the fourth or fifth centuries, exists here, implying this story was a later invention. Why would Damasus, a man who promoted the martyr cults at every opportunity outside the city, neglect any opportunity to celebrate their lives within the city itself? The only likely explanation is that no such event actually occurred, and was a later interpolation in order to encourage more pilgrimage inside the city when it was booming in the suburbs. A more likely explanation for the location of the church is its position just off the *via Aurelia*, the main, and consequently very busy, road into Rome from the west. **(see Fig.1a)** The road also led to a set of catacombs outside the walls, later embellished with a basilica to St. Pancras.[72]

6.2.3. Titulus Sanctae Caeciliae

This church also lies within the modern Trastevere region, off the modern Piazza S. Caecilia, which would place the church parallel to the road that went across the *pons Theodosii*, about 200 metres away in late antiquity.[73] As has been suggested previously, it is not unlikely that the rebuilding and embellishment of this bridge encouraged the building of this church, so that a Christian centre was provided for those using the new monument. In the same way, the bridge's novelty may have increased the popularity of this route through the city, at least in the short term, to the benefit of the church. Alternatively, the church may have already been built, and *its* presence may have made the road on which it lay more popular, and so prompting the very Christian Theodosius I to carry out this work.

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[70] A grave of that date on this site is not unlikely- see Chapter 2, pp.80-1.
[71] *AA.SS.* Oct. VI. 441. The *Urbs Ravennatium* is the medieval name for the *Castra Ravennatium*, which occupied the area between S. Maria in Trastevere & S. Crisogono today-see *LTUR.* III.254-5.
[72] *LP* I. 262.
[73] The probable replacement of the third century *pons Probi*, a project described by Symmachus- *Rel.*25 & 26. Nothing of the bridge survives today.

As at S. Callisto though, S. Caecilia also lays claim to be the site of a martyrdom, or at least a death, this time of the martyr Caecilia. It is in this way that the location of the existing basilica is traditionally explained, although the story of her death places her attempted martyrdom elsewhere. This structure, according to a damaged inscription, may date from 379-464. Another inscription of fifth century date is said to refer to the centre, and the priests of the church attended the synods of 499 and 595 in the city.[74] A fifth century martyrology, initially attributed to Jerome, rather confusingly names Caecilia on three separate days, but the sixth century *LP* comes down on the 22nd November for her feast day, the day when pope Vigilius (537-555) was arrested in her *ecclesia*.[75] The story of Caecilia's life, recorded in the martyr acts, seems to have been certainly believed and accepted by the ninth century, when the current church was built by Pascal I (817-24), which replaced an ancient one. He returned the body of the saint to the church along with the remains of Valerian, Tibertius and Maximus who appear as other martyrs in the account of her life and death.[76] An inscription within the apse also records the fact that Pascal's church replaced a much older structure, which was famous in his day, presumably because of the story that surrounded it.[77]

The remains found underneath this ninth century structure are also of interest. They date from the second century BC to the ninth century AD, none of which can be identified with a *titulus* or church on this site preceding the current building. **(see Fig.5h)** The *insula* found here that dates to the first half of the second century AD has been identified with the house of the Caecilii, a noble household, and a more likely origin of the name of the church. The remains of an early Christian baptistery have been found just beyond the north wall of the church, however, that date from the fourth or fifth centuries. This was essentially a small hall with an hexagonal baptismal pool in the centre, the last phase of which was ninth century as part of Pascal's reconstruction of the site. To the east of this was found a small bathhouse that is the traditional place assigned for Caecilia's attempted martyrdom, and dates from the third to the early fourth century perhaps.[78]

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[74] *ICUR* I 816, 116; *MGH.AA.*XII.411,414; *MGH.Ep.* I. 367.
[75] *Mart. Hier.* in *AA.SS.* Nov. II.1.121, 144, 146; *LP* I. 297.
[76] *LP* II.56.
[77] *ICUR* II. 151, 156, 444.
[78] *LTUR* I. 206-7.

The story of her martyrdom, probably written in the sixth century, claims that Caecilia died on this spot, said to be her house, after two failed attempts to kill her elsewhere, which explained why there is a church here.[79] Within the baptistery or *insula* however there is no epigraphic memorial of this belief, and there is no other written or archaeological evidence to say such a conviction existed before the sixth and ninth centuries. Certainly, as with the other intramural examples, one would have expected some sort of Damasian verse commemorating such an important martyr here from the fourth century. The fact that no such evidence exists before the martyr acts appear does seem rather suspicious. This again is suggestive of the story of Caecilia's martyrdom on this site being a later fiction, in order to explain the name of the church in a more powerful way or simply to attract more pilgrims. This is confirmed by the now widely held conviction that Caecilia was in fact martyred in Sicily under Marcus Aurelius, which confirms the belief held by Venantius Fortunatus, bishop of Poitiers writing in the sixth century.[80] The deceit surrounding Caecilia's martyrdom in Rome was finalised by Pascal I, who brought the body of the saint to the church. The more likely reason for the siting of this church is, in my opinion, the proximity it would have had to the important and newly reconstructed *pons Probi*, renamed the *pons Theodosii*, with this bridge also being on a main route into and out of the city. **(see Fig.1a)**

6.2.4. Titulus Sanctae Susannae

This example of a 'martyrdom church' follows a similar pattern to those above. That is, an intramural foundation that is named after a martyr which claims to be on the site of their martyrdom, which is used as the explanation for its presence at this location. A legendary story exists that describes this. The claims of this story are dubious at best, but again it is the lack of any evidence from the period before the story's creation, within or beneath the church, for this belief, that makes such a motivation for the church's creation here so unlikely. Its placement alongside the busy *Alta Semita* road, a main route into and out of the ancient city, and by the popular Baths of Diocletian, seems a more likely reasoning for its location.

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[79] Delehaye H., *Étude sur le légendier romain*, pp.219-20.
[80] De Rossi G., *Roma Sottereana,* II.147.

The story of Susanna's life and death is thought to originate from the sixth century. It describes Susanna as the daughter of a Gabinius, a priest and brother of Bishop Gaius (283-96). Susanna is described as being betrothed to Maximian, the emperor Diocletian's son. When she refuses to marry him, she is eventually killed outside Gaius' house. This house is said to be next to Gabinius', where there is a church, where the bishop commemorates his niece in a service after her death. These two houses are then reported as being joined together and as being used as a place of worship at the time of writing. This church is described as being in the sixth region of the city near the *vicum Mammurtini (vel Mammuri) ante forum Salustii.*[81]

The first reference to the martyr Susanna, and possibly the church, in the written record, is in the early fifth century. A version of the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* states that a commemoration of the saint took place on the 11th August *ad duas domos iuxta duo clecinas.*[82] The last phrase is thought to be a misspelling of *diocletianas*, and therefore a reference to his baths. All this ties in with the two houses mentioned in the legend and the location given, although the site of the Forum of Sallust is unclear, but it is likely to have been near or within his gardens situated also on the Quirinal. However, this could simply be a well known reference that was used by the writer of the *passio* to add authenticity. Further, the *vicum* or *via Mammurtini* is thought to have been near to the Baths of Caracalla off the Via Appia, as a *bal(i)neum Mamertini* existed somewhere between the *via Appia* and *Latina.*[83] Also the reference to the Diocletian baths is far from certain. The next mention of the church perhaps occurs in 499 when two presbyters of a *titulus Gai* appear. This may be an allusion to the Bishop Gaius in the story, or another Gaius who owned the property. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the centre is named after this individual rather than Susanna. The appearance of a *titulus sanctae Susanna* does not occur until 595, that is at a date likely to be after the creation of the legend of the saint. There is a theory that the *titulus Gai* actually became the church of S. Caio, which was located on the opposite side of the road to S. Susanna, but which now no longer exists.[84]

Two houses were discovered under the church which date to the late first century and the first third of the second century AD respectively, but this is not an

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[81] *LP* I.161. The passage about S. Susanna is a later interpolation, see *LP*.I. xcix; *AA.SS.* Feb. III. 61-4, Aug. II. 632.
[82] *AA.SS.* Nov. II.1.104, II.2.434-5.
[83] *LTUR* V. 177-8; *Not./Cur.*I. – Nordh, p.73.15.
[84] *MGH.AA.* XII. 413; *MGH.Ep.* I. 367; *LTUR* IV. 387.

unusual find in Rome, and no evidence for any Christian worship has been found in either. It had been thought that the purpose-built church was constructed in the fourth century, but recent archaeological evidence has found that the church was actually first built in the late eighth or early ninth century under Leo III, with only a fourth century hall preceding it.[85] **(Fig.6s)** There is no evidence that this hall became a Christian centre until the late sixth century, with the first appearance of the *titulus* dedicated to Susanna, which presumably this church is the continuation of. [86]

The key problem with the foundation story then is the lack of fourth century evidence for the death of Susanna here, and even for a Christian presence at this location before the account of her death was written. No Christian painting, Damasian epigrams or other fourth century evidence for Christian worship, exists here for that period, features that we always see at locations where a martyr's burial is believed to be. This again implies that the story of Susanna's death on this spot is a later interpolation and invention, in order to increase the popularity of the church, and Rome itself to a public that was now in the grip of a martyr fever. It is certainly possible, as the evidence suggests, that this site was known as *duas domos* from an early period and that Susanna may have had some sort of link to this place as well as to bishop Gaius. However, the lack of any early visible commemoration of her death here makes it very unlikely that she was actually martyred on this spot, and that this is an elaboration of an older story. The church lies on the *Alta Semita*, the main route into the city from the north-east, which, rather importantly I believe, joins the *via Nomentana* at the *porta Collina*. **(see Fig.1a)** The *Nomentana* in turn lead to the tomb basilica of Saint Agnes. Its location here is therefore more likely to have been chosen for these reasons, that is, its position on a pre-existing and already very popular pilgrim route.

To conclude our discussion of the martyrdom churches we will look at two examples that claim a similar heritage to the cases we have already examined, but can be directly compared to the tomb churches. This is because the following relate to the martyrdoms of Agnes and Lawrence, two individuals whose burials were honoured from the fourth century by embellishments and basilicas around and over their tombs. The churches of S. Agnese in Agone and S. Lorenzo in Panisperna claim to be built on

[85] *LTUR* IV. 387-8; *LP* II. 3.
[86] Evidence for its existence in the seventh century- *LP* I. 371, 375.

the site of their respective martyrdoms, but we will see that the evidence for such claims is entirely lacking, as compared to the copious proof for their burial place. I am placing these examples last as technically they lie outside the remit of this study, that is both appear to have been constructed in the seventh or eighth century. I am including them however as they show quite clearly, I believe, how such martyrdom churches were in fact a literary construct that were made concrete after, or at the same time as, a hagiographical tradition was created in order to take advantage of a growing fervour for relics and Christian heroes. In this way, technically they were built at their respective locations for historical reasons, but these were as false and invented as those given for the previous fourth and fifth century examples.

6.2.5. Sacellum Sanctae Agnetis Agonis

This church, more accurately described as an oratory before the seventeenth century reconstruction, is located on the western side of the Piazza Navona, the ancient Stadium of Domitian. We first hear of it within two of the late eighth century itineraries of the city for pilgrims as *Circus flamineus ibi sca. Agnes*. This becomes *sanctae Agneti Agonis*, *de cripta Agonis* or *de Agone* by the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[87] The current baroque church greatly altered the oratory's structure, although it is still accessible from the church today. As such, much of the information for its original appearance and structure comes from the sixteenth century sketches and writings of Ugonio.[88] **(Fig. 6t)** From these it seems that the oratory consisted of a small narrow hall located between two sets of arches of decreasing size. These may therefore have supported the seats of the Stadium of Domitian. So the chapel was effectively created beneath them. An altar also seems to have existed within the space.[89]

Within all the versions of the *passio* of St. Agnes, described in detail above, it is interesting to note that no mention of the Stadium is made. Only a reference to a theatre is brought up during the story of Agnes' martyrdom in the sixth century, and Prudentius writing a hundred years or so earlier describes her being beheaded outside a brothel in the corner of a square, *in plateae*, which could also be just a street.[90] Ambrose, writing

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[87] *Itin. Eins.* – Val.Zucc. II.180, 195; *Mirabilia* – Val.Zucc. III.255, 286, 299; Hülsen C., *Le Chiese di Roma nel medio evo*, p.168.
[88] Armellini M., *Le chiese di Roma dal secolo IV al XIX* (ed. Cecchelli C.), p.470.
[89] *LTUR* I. 27-8; *CBCR* I.39.
[90] *AA.SS.* Ian. II. 353; Prud. *Perist.* XIV.38-90.

in 377, only describes Agnes' youth and the fact that she was beheaded, and Damasus (366-84) similarly makes no mention of any place of martyrdom, only her youth once more and that she was burnt instead.[91] From this it seems apparent that the belief that Agnes was martyred in the Stadium of Domitian was a later one, and had more to do with the reputation that place had for brothels than any factual knowledge of the event.

Further, the fact that we have no record of the oratory until the late eighth century, coupled with the lack of any reference to it in the sixth century *passio* of the saint, suggests the oratory's placement here took place somewhere between those two dates. In other words, it is a suspiciously late addition to the martyrological landscape of Rome. This implies a 'best guess' scenario was used for its location, and that it was an opportunistic and pragmatic intervention that sought to take advantage of the martyr's popularity.

Whether any connection to a brothel was a later interpolation in order to 'spice up' the story we cannot say, however, the inconsistencies surrounding her mode of death shows that rumour, and an unreliable oral tradition, played a significant part in its creation, including the place of her death as well no doubt. Such a realisation, which was almost without question the reality behind the production of many of the other hagiographical stories, shows that the likelihood for there to be any real history behind the beliefs surrounding the 'martyrdom churches', is doubtful. S. Agnese in Agone then seems to be representative of an opportunistic foundation to take advantage of the saint's popularity in the seventh and eighth centuries by building an oratory on a site that, albeit without any factual basis, was seen as a likely, or believable, place for Agnes' death. The lack of any early evidence for this site to be linked to even a belief that this was where Agnes was murdered, coupled with the inconsistencies of that story, make it plain that this was a church borne out of opportunism rather than a genuine Christian tradition. Its placement within the ruins of the Stadium of Domitian was more likely due to this place still being a popular focal point for the people of this part of the city, the centre of medieval Rome. It was also not far from the main pilgrim route that led to St. Peter's, still known as the Via del Pellegrino.

As a final point, it is interesting to compare this oratory with the extramural church dedicated to Agnes as well. As we have seen, some sort of embellishments existed around her tomb, and a huge mausoleum was placed next to it by the mid-fourth

[91] Ambrose, *De Virg.* I.2; Ferrua (ed.), *Epig. Dam.* no.37.

century. Yet, no commemoration existed around her supposed place of martyrdom until the seventh or eighth century. This indicates, apart from the obviously dubious nature of the oratory's claim, the relative unimportance of supposed martyrdom sites for the Church, as compared to the sites of their burial.

6.2.6. Basilica Sancti Laurentii in Formonso/Panispernae

Our final example of a martyrdom church lies on the Viminal hill near the ancient Subura, just north-west of S. Maria Maggiore, and claims to be built on the site where St. Lawrence was killed. **(Fig.6u)** Little is known about its history, however, beyond some early medieval references describing pilgrim routes through the city. The church first appears in the seventh century as *Basilica quae appellatur sci. Laurenti ubi graticula eiusdem habetur Laurenti*, and was restored under Hadrian I (772-95).[92] The church is absent from all the usual records before then however.[93] The next reference is from the late eighth century Einsiedeln Itinerary, where it is described twice as *(Sancti) Laurentii in formonso ubi (ille) assatus est* and once as simply *Sancti Laurentii in Formonso*. This not only confirms its existence, but why it was built, and the belief, which existed from the fourth century, that the saint met his death by being roasted on a gridiron. A small donation by Leo III (795-816) seems to indicate that it was only a modest oratory.[94] The appellation *in formonso*, perhaps referring to the Pope Formosus (891-6), is replaced by the toponym *in panisperna*, an allusion to the medieval street on which it lay. This change certainly took place by the thirteenth century and possibly as early as the twelfth. This is the name which remains today.[95] Its description in the pilgrim guides of Rome specifically as the church on the spot where Lawrence was martyred, indicates the prominence it achieved as a result of that claim.

The sixth century story of Lawrence's martyrdom, alongside the earlier descriptions of the event by Damasus, Ambrose and Prudentius, as well as the later

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[92] It appears in the seventh century 'Salzburg Catalogue' – Hülsen C., *Le Chiese*, p.3; *LP* I. 507.

[93] Cf. Geertman H., *More Veterum*, pp.154-6 who argues, unconvincingly, that the *titulus sancti Laurenti* in the 499 synod list is this church.

[94] *Itin. Eins.* – Val.Zucc. II.179, 189, 192; *LP* II.11.

[95] *Panisperna* may refer to some sort of distribution of bread and ham here by the Church, or perhaps the type of shops on the street. However, this area was, by the early medieval period, part of the *disabitato*; *Mirabilia* [14th century] – Val.Zucc. III.187, 189; *Mirabilia* [13th Century] – Val.Zucc. III.83; *Mirabilia* [12th Century] – Val.Zucc. III.26. The church is described as *basilica in Formonsum* in the life of Leo III in the *LP* (above) which suggests that the church was perhaps not linked to Formosus after all, the latter

remarks about the church within the medieval descriptions of the city, once more provide an inconsistent picture, and one that is surrounded more in myth than reality. All the ancient and medieval references seem clear as to how they believe the martyr died; with fire and on a gridiron.[96] What is less consistent and clear, and for us more important, is *where* this event took place. The fourth and fifth-century sources for Lawrence's death do not state where the martyrdom occurred at all, and it is only with the late eighth-century pilgrim itineraries that the event is located on the site of this church.[97] We cannot say what the basis for this belief was, but it was certainly not based on early source material. The sixth century *passio* describing his death puts it in the *thermas iuxta palatium Salustii*, where he dies while being tortured on a brazier. Before this, he is reported as being tortured in the *basilica Iovis*, which lay within the *palatium Tiberii*.[98] The late eighth-century pilgrim itineraries only mention the church in relation to the site of Lawrence's martyrdom, but the twelfth and fourteenth-century guides to the city describe the martyrdom as within the Baths of Olympiades, and also mention a *palatium Tiberianum* in connection to Lawrence's death.[99] Most of these structures are difficult to identify, and it is impossible to say whether such buildings were still genuinely visible and identifiable during the eighth, twelfth or fourteenth centuries, or are just references back to the written tradition. However, the *basilica Iovis* could be the *Capitolium Vetus*, which was a small shrine to Jupiter, Juno and Minerva, that lay to the north of the *Alta Semita* on the Quirinal, and so approximately 650 metres from the church.[100] The other buildings described cannot be identified in this area with any reliability, with the exception perhaps of the Sallustian Palace. This may have either stood within the *Horti Sallustiani*, the area roughly between the *Alta Semita* and the Aurelian walls, or was the Temple of Salus, referred to as the *templum Salusti* or *Salutis* in the fourth century, which lay just to the north or west of the Baths of Constantine.[101]

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not becoming pope until a hundred years later. Either that or Leo's entry is from a late manuscript; Hülsen C., *Le Chiese*, p. 293.

[96] The veracity of this is also doubtful and shows how such stories were soon embroidered- see n.97 for refs. However a *craticula beati Laurentii martyris* was to be found in Rome in 519- *Epistolae romanorum pontificum genuinae*, (ed. Thiel), pp.873-5.

[97] *Epig. Dam.* (ed. Ferrua), no. 33- no such memorial was found within this church of course; Ambrose, *De Offic.* I.41; Prud. *Perist.* II. 45-492 although it may suggest it took place in the residence of the Urban Prefect.

[98] *AA.SS.* Aug.II. 519.

[99] See nn. 94-5.

[100] An ancient monument (Varro, *Ling.* V.158) and still prominent in the first century AD (Martial, V.22.4, VII.73.4). It continued to exist and was recognised in the fourth century as *Capitolium antiquum*: *Not./Cur.*VI. – Nordh, p.81.8; *LTUR*.I. 234.

[101] *LTUR* III. 79-81, IV. 46-8, 229-30, V. 62-3; *Not./Cur.*VI. – Nordh, p.81.6.

In any case, neither of these examples can be described as near the church, and the rest are of doubtful provenance.

The only archaeological remains beneath the current church consist of some rooms with walls of *opus reticulatum* and mosaic pavements, and part of a separate mosaic floor, all of which have been dated to the early second century AD. No evidence survives for a church earlier than the existing sixteenth century one, but a Renaissance description characterises it as a small single naved hall. Because of the sixth century and later discussions of the foundation, the remains that have been found under the church have been variously identified with the Baths of Olympiades, the Palace of Tiberius, or baths or a palace of Decius, some references seeming to suggest that the church was founded within these buildings.[102] No evidence for any baths or a building as monumental as a palace has come to light under or near the church, although the medieval sources are quite insistent that the baths of Olympiades lay around or next to it. The various rooms discovered were certainly part of some type of Roman building, but no sort of Christian adaptation can be seen, and whether they were visibly former baths of that name by the medieval period is more questionable. It is more likely some ruins were discernible around or near the church and that these were simply assumed to be the baths mentioned in the sixth century story. It is equally possible these were simply the ruins of a Roman house or *insula*, although it appears the description of baths in the *passio* proved more convincing for the seventh or eighth century builders. Perhaps the gridiron described was the one used for hot coals and water that were added for a *caldarium* or *laconica*. The question remains though, whether this was genuinely the place of Lawrence's martyrdom or a later opportunist intervention to take advantage of the popularity of the saint. The late appearance of this foundation, coupled with the inconsistencies surrounding Lawrence's mode and place of death, suggest the latter.

Again, we can say that later descriptions of the place of Lawrence's martyrdom are dubious in veracity, that is, they do not seem to be based on fourth century or earlier tradition, but rather only appear from the sixth century onwards. The elaborate and dramatic form of execution that is given for Lawrence's death, even by the fourth century, also puts the whole tradition of his martyrdom into doubt. There is little question that a deacon called Lawrence was killed at Rome in the third century, but he was far more likely to have been beheaded outside the city, as all the other characters

[102] *LTUR* III.183; *CBCR* II.185- see especially the quote of F. Biondio around 1447.

featured in his passion were. Further, there was no church on the site until the seventh century at the earliest, which is also suspicious, and indicative of a later invented tradition. As such, it is far more likely that this church was not built on a site that was long believed to be the place where the martyr Lawrence met his death, as there seems to have been no such tradition. More likely it was constructed, probably in the eighth century, somewhere that was easily accessible from the *via Tiburtina* and the extra-mural tomb church of the saint as part of the creation of some sort of pilgrim route. The construction of S. Lorenzo in Fonte nearby, between the seventh and ninth centuries, said to be the site of where Lawrence was imprisoned, can be seen as part of this strategy.[103]

Once more, the lack of early evidence for this church being on a sacred site for Christians is in stark contrast to the tomb church of St. Lawrence on the *via Tiburtina* outside the city. It is not only the absence of a Damasian epigram that is the most obvious difference. It is also the dearth of *any* fourth of fifth-century material that mentions the place of martyrdom for this famous saint, in contrast to the large body of evidence that describe where he was buried. This makes the late foundation of S. Lorenzo in Panisperna even more suspicious. Where there is a genuine historical belief behind a church construction in Rome we would see evidence for that from the fourth century. We only see this with those foundations centred on a martyr's tomb.

6.3. Conclusion

What we have seen from the above examples is the clear differentiation between the 'tomb churches' of Rome and the 'martyrdom churches' of the city. Both claim historical motives for their location within or outside the city, but it is only with those foundations centred on a martyr's resting place or grave that this is justifiable and provable. The reason for this, I believe, is that for Christianity the most potent and powerful route to God was through the body, bones and relics of the apostles and martyrs. Ever since the woman had her sight restored by touching the clothes of Jesus, Christians had believed that to be in close proximity to or to touch, directly or indirectly, the bones of the holy or their clothes, was to be directly connected to the

[103] *LTUR* III.182-3. For more on this strategy see Chapter 2.

power of God.[104] This could grant them their prayers or cure them of illnesses. As such, the burial places of the apostles and martyrs were recorded, remembered and honoured. Before Constantine this meant a decorated tomb, graffiti asking for favours, and special, albeit secretive, celebrations of the individual on a specific day of the year around that grave site. After Constantine such honour for the grave could be more overt, and the practice of Christians wanting to be buried near to such a tomb or grave was formalised by a cemetery basilica in the vicinity. Also, the burial site itself was further embellished, and at some point a large basilica was built over it, with the grave as its focus. This allowed Christian ceremony to take place nearby, and for the increasing flow of pilgrims to be able to visit the shrine more conveniently.

Such a tradition of honour and remembrance was not repeated for the site of a martyrdom. This is due to the simple fact that such places had no extra power or holiness as a consequence, unlike a burial site, as no relics of the martyr remained there, which is where the real celestial potency lay for Christians. Such places were, if anything, just locations of historical interest, and as a result no records survive from the fourth century or before that indicate any celebration or honour given to them. Their initial appearance in martyr stories and pilgrim routes from the sixth century, as well as being the focus for several churches only built after that time, suggest an invented unreliable history was at work, based on inconsistent oral traditions of previous years. Martyrdom sites begin to appear, I believe, in order to take advantage of the increasing pilgrim industry in Rome, which was burgeoning during the same period. We must therefore see the creation of the Martyr Acts and the appearance of the 'martyrdom churches' as part of the same process. The latter were not located on these sites for historical reasons, but rather for their location alongside main routes within the city which often led to the tomb churches, cemeteries and catacombs just outside it. This was to encourage pilgrimage and for Rome to become a major Christian centre as a result.

The same scepticism is now levelled at the idea that *domus ecclesiae* evolved into fourth century basilicas on the same site,[105] the justification given by some as the reasoning behind the location of the other churches in Rome. Once more, any physical

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[104] Matthew 9.20-22.

[105] Eg. Guidobaldi F. 'L'inserimento delle chiese titolari di Roma nel tessuto urbano preesistente: osservazioni ed implicazioni', in *Queritur inventus colitur. Miscellanea in onore di p. Umberto Fasola*, I, p 384-5.

evidence for these pre-Constantinian house churches is completely lacking. It is certainly correct to say that many Christian communities in Rome and elsewhere used people's houses as places to celebrate their religion in private and away from the pagan world in which they lived. It would also be fair to say that it is a big leap of faith to imply from that that most or any churches were founded on the same spot as those houses. First of all, the idea that Christians had regular houses they always went to in order to worship, which this theory implies, is fanciful in my view. A persecuted minority, especially so in the sixty years before Constantine, would have moved to different locations very frequently for safety. Further, would a rich widow destroy her family's house in order to build a church, or would she, more sensibly, have given money to the Church for them to buy a plot of land and build it? Also, would a Christian, if indeed they did own a whole block of flats, have evicted all their tenants and pulled it down to build a church? Or more likely did the Church authorities themselves pull it down in order to use a specific site? Further, as with the later 'martyrdom churches', would not a Damasus, or similar fourth century figure, want to commemorate the Christian history of a site within the later church? The fact that no such memorial for a 'house-church' was recorded or survives also puts this theory into doubt.

The fact remains then, that for the vast majority of churches constructed in Rome in the fourth and fifth centuries the decision as to their location was based on pragmatic ad-hoc reasoning. The only foundations for which we can justifiably argue that the choice of their location was made for historical reasons are the 'tomb churches' of the city.

Conclusion

In essence, my thesis has argued for the strategic use of 'space' and 'location' by pagan and Christian builders, and seems to offer a new approach to the Christianisation of Rome in the fourth and fifth centuries AD. Most previous work on the first churches of the city has tended to be influenced by the theories of Kirsch and von Schöenebeck. Kirsch tried to explain the location of the churches by arguing for there being earlier *domus ecclesiae* on their sites, von Schöenebeck argued for a political reason to explain their absence from the temple-laden centre of the city, namely the anger such buildings would have provoked amongst the pagan aristocracy. With Kirsch's idea now unpopular, scholars have tended to gravitate towards the random placement theory proposed by Guidobaldi.[1] Equally, there has been a shift towards looking at churches in the context of their contemporary urban setting, and noting, rightly, that many lie along the main roads of ancient Rome. There still remains a belief in the separateness of the pagan and Christian elements of the city however.

What I have tried to do is to ignore all these various theories and to look at the first Christian churches of Rome anew, and examine their location within the city without the presumptions and expectations that have hindered, I believe, earlier studies. Such an approach has brought me to the conclusion that there was a strategy behind the placement of many Christian centres that sought to make Christianity as dominant in the city as the worship of the gods. This conclusion was reached not only because of the patterns made by these churches, but also by looking at the same time at the pagan temples and shrines in the city and noting the underlying design behind where they were built. Why would the Christian authorities of the city not want their buildings to be as prominent as the temples and shrines, against whom they were competing for hearts and minds?

I have suggested that along with changes to the calendar and the actual appearance of churches on the Roman landscape, an essential part of the Christianisation process by the ecclesiastical authorities in the city was the 'location' of these churches. These locations, I believe, were deliberately chosen to encourage the city's population to convert, to actively engage in Christian worship in a church or at a pilgrim's shrine, and to confront or challenge various important and popular pagan sites

[1] Guidobaldi F., 'L'inserimento della chiese titolari'.

in the city. Much of this strategy is simply the continuation of the practice of pagan temples and shrines being located in areas of high public congregation and in places of high visibility. In other words, this was a policy to make Rome and its population work and behave like a Christian city in the same way as it had worked for so long as a pagan one. This church-building policy was in many ways an attempt at a fundamental policy of change, therefore, to complement the calendrical innovations introduced by the Church.

Such a building programme was possible because of the independence the Church enjoyed from the state, where decisions to do with building and construction were made by, in the case of Rome at least, the bishop, with a second tier of clerical administrators. This meant the policy of Christianisation through church location was a possible as well as desirable course of action to take by the Roman ecclesiastical authorities.

Previous studies of Christian building in Rome of this period tend to emphasise the duality and separation of pagan and Christian space in the city. As we have observed, this is not the case. Earlier surveys have also ignored or quickly passed over the topographical contexts of these early churches, deciding instead to focus purely on the archaeology and history of the site of the church itself. Such an approach fails to recognise the likely thought processes that went behind building a church in a certain area, or the implications and effects such a project would have had on the neighbouring buildings and the people who lived in the immediate area. These churches were as much a part of the make-up of late antique Rome as the temples or buildings of government were. This can only be appreciated if these Christian centres are not viewed in archaeological isolation but rather as part of the surrounding contemporary urban landscape with the varied assortment of buildings that made it up. If we do this we can see that many churches were built in visually prominent or easily accessible areas along pilgrim routes as well as being near to, or owning, formal places for bathing which may therefore have been used for baptisms. Also, many, like their pagan counterparts, were part of the social and leisure life of the city's inhabitants by being situated near to various circuses, amphitheatres and theatres.

In this way, many of the first churches of Rome were not built as isolated places of prayer, away from a corrupting world, but rather as very much part of the outside world. All this was to encourage Christianity to be as much a feature of the daily life of the city as it was hoped to be that of the religious.

Figures

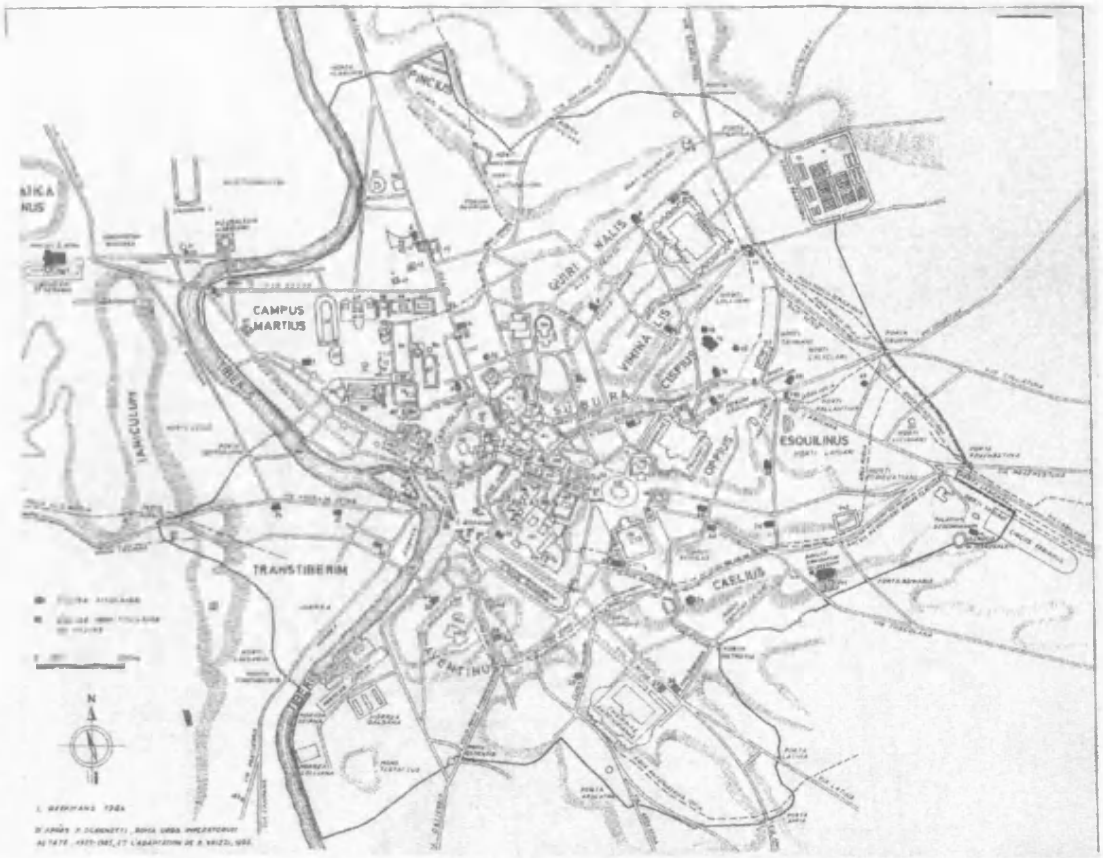

Fig. 1a. Map of late antique Rome (from Reekmans L., in *Actes du IXe Cong. Int. Chret.*).

1. St-Laurent-in-Damaso.
2. St-Laurent-in-Lucina.
3. St-Marc.
4. St-Marcel.
5. Basilica Julia.
6. Ste-Agathe-des-Goths.
7. St-Pierre-aux-Liens.
8. St-Vital.
9. Ste-Suzanne.
10. St-Cyriaque.
11. Oratoire au monte della Giustizia.
12. Ste-Pudentienne.
13. Sts-Côme-et-Damien-ad-Presepem.
14. Ste-Marie-Majeure.
15. St-André-cata-Barbara.
16. Ste-Praxède.
17. Sts-Silvestre-et-Martin.
18. St-Eusèbe.
19. Ste-Bibiane.
20. St-Mathieu.
21. Sts-Marcellin-et-Pierre.
22. St-Clement.
23. Quatre-Saints-Couronnés.
24. St-Étienne-le-Rond.
25. Sts-Jean-et-Paul.
26. St-Sixte-le-Vieux.
27. Sts-Nérée-et-Achillée.
28. Ste-Balbine.
29. Ste-Prisque.
30. Ste-Sabine.
31. Ste-Anastasie.
32. Ste-Cécile.
33. St-Chrysogone.
34. Sts-Jules-et-Callixte.
50. Mausoleum.
51. Terebinthus Neronis.
52. Pyramis (Meta Romuli).
53. Pons Neronianus.
54. Arcus Arcadii Honorii et Theodosii.
55. Pons Aelius.
56. Arcus Gratiani Valentiniani et Theodosii.
57. Mausoleum Augusti.
58. Ustrinum domus Augustae.
59. Horologium Augusti.
60. Ara Pacis.
61. Templum Solis.
62. Ustrinum Marci Aurelii.
63. Ustrinum Antonini Pii.
64. Ustrinum Hadriani?
65. Stadium Domitiani.
66. Odeum Domitiani.
67. Thermae Neronianae et Alexandrinae.
68. Porticus.
69. Templum Matidiae.
70. Templum Hadriani.
71. Arcus Claudii.
72. Pantheon.
73. Thermae Agrippae.
74. Templum Boni Eventus.
75. Saepta Julia.
76. Iseum et Serapeum.
77. Diribitorium.
78. Porticus Minucia.
79. Templa.
80. Porticus Pompeianae.
81. Theatrum Pompeii.
82. Templum Minervae Chalcidicae.
83. Divorum templum.
84. Arcus Novus Diocletiani.
85. Theatrum Balbi.
86. Crypta Balbi.
87. Porticus Philippi.
88. Porticus Octaviae.
89. Templum Apollinis-Templum Bellonae.
90. Pons Valentiniani.
91. Pons Fabricius.
92. Pons Cestius.
93. Templum Aesculapii.
94. Pons Aemilius.
95. Theatrum Marcelli.
96. Templa fori Holitorii.
97. Templa Matris Matutae et Fortunae.
98. Templum Portuni?
99. Templum Herculis Victoris?
100. Statio annonae.
101. Ara maxima Herculis.
102. Aedes Aemiliana Herculis.
103. Mithraeum.
104. Ianus Quadrifrons.
105. Templum Iovis Optimi Maximi.
106. Templum Opis-Templum Fidei.
107. Templum Iunonis Monetae.
108. Tabularium.
109. Basilica Constantini (Maxentii).
110. Porticus Margaritaria.
111. Templum Veneris et Romae.
112. Arcus Titi.
113. Porum Iulium.
114. Forum Traiani.
115. Forum Augusti.
116. Forum Nervae.
117. Forum Pacis.
118. Domus Tiberiana.
119. Templum Matris Magnae.
120. Domus Liviae (Augusti).
121. Templum Apollinis.
122. Domus Augustana.
123. Aedes Caesarum?
124. Septizodium.
125. Templum Serapidis.
126. Thermae Constantini.
127. Porticus Liviae.
128. Lacus Orphei?
129. Macellum Liviae.
130. Nymphaeum aquae Iuliae.
131. Nymphaeum hortorum Licinianorum.
132. Colossus Neronis.
133. Meta Sudans.
134. Arcus Constantini.
135. Amphitheatrum Flavium.
136. Thermae Titi.
137. Ludus Magnus.
138. Ludus Matutinus.
139. Templum Claudii.
140. Cohors V Vigilum.
141. Castra nova Equitum singularium.
142. Castra priora Equitum singularium.
143. Thermae Helenianae.
144. Templum Iunonis Reginae.
145. Templum Minervae.
146. Templum Dianae.
147. Thermae Decianae.
148. Thermae Suranae.
149. Mithraeum.
150. Pons Probi.
151. Molinae.
152. Templum Iovis Heliopolitani.
153. Templum Fortis Fortunae.

Figures

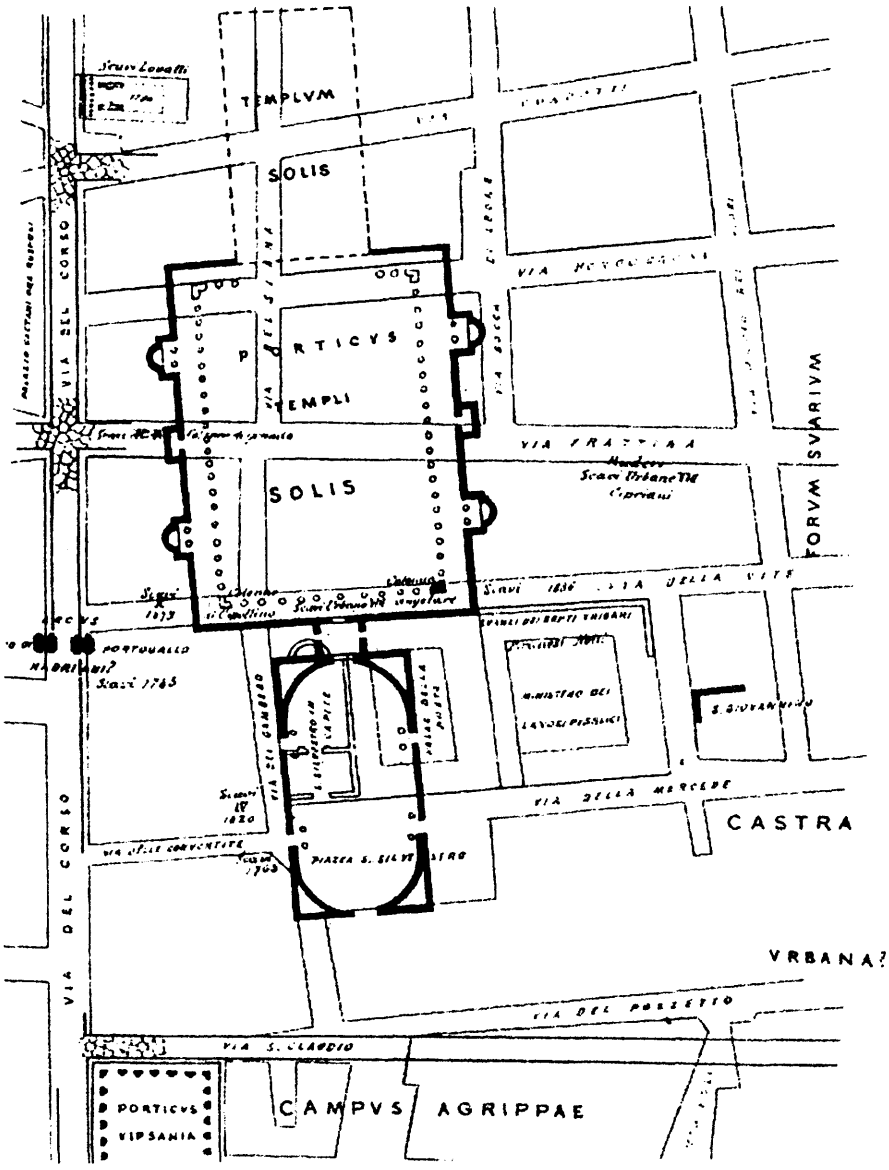

Fig. 2a. Temple of Sol (from Castagnoli F. in *RendPontAcc.* 51-52 with N-S alignment).

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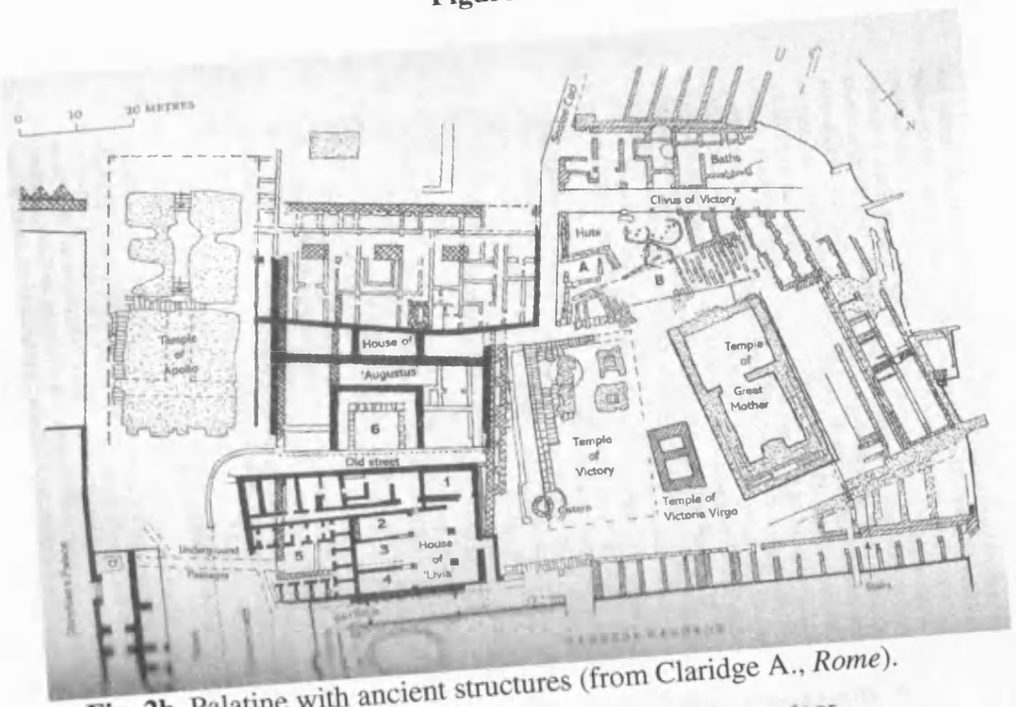

Fig. 2b. Palatine with ancient structures (from Claridge A., *Rome*).

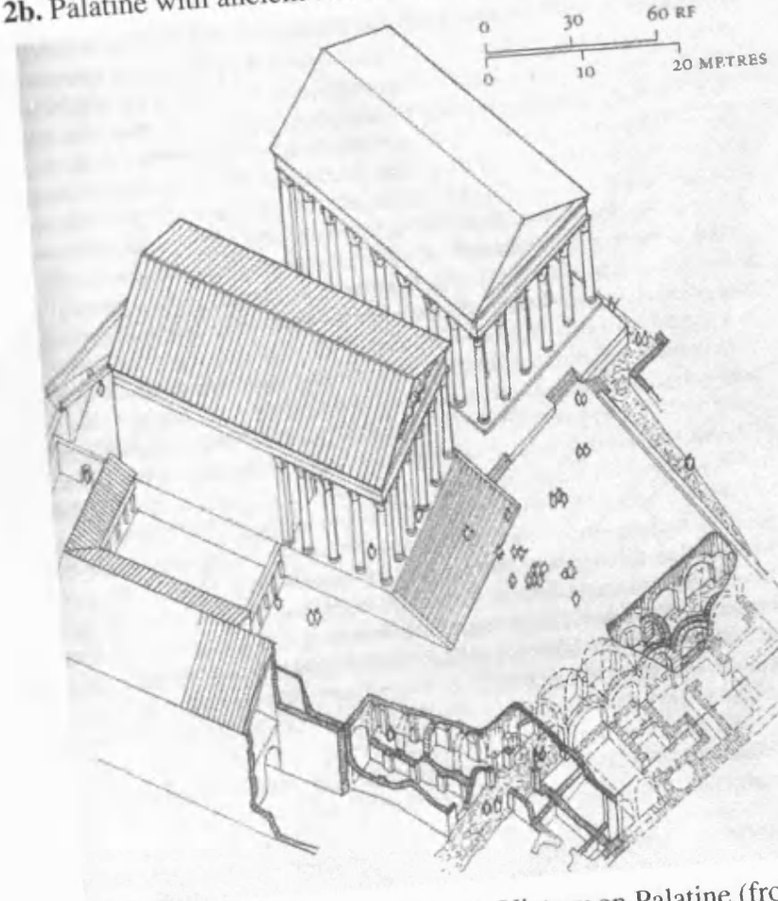

Fig. 2c. Temples of Magna Mater & Victory on Palatine (from Claridge A., *Rome*).

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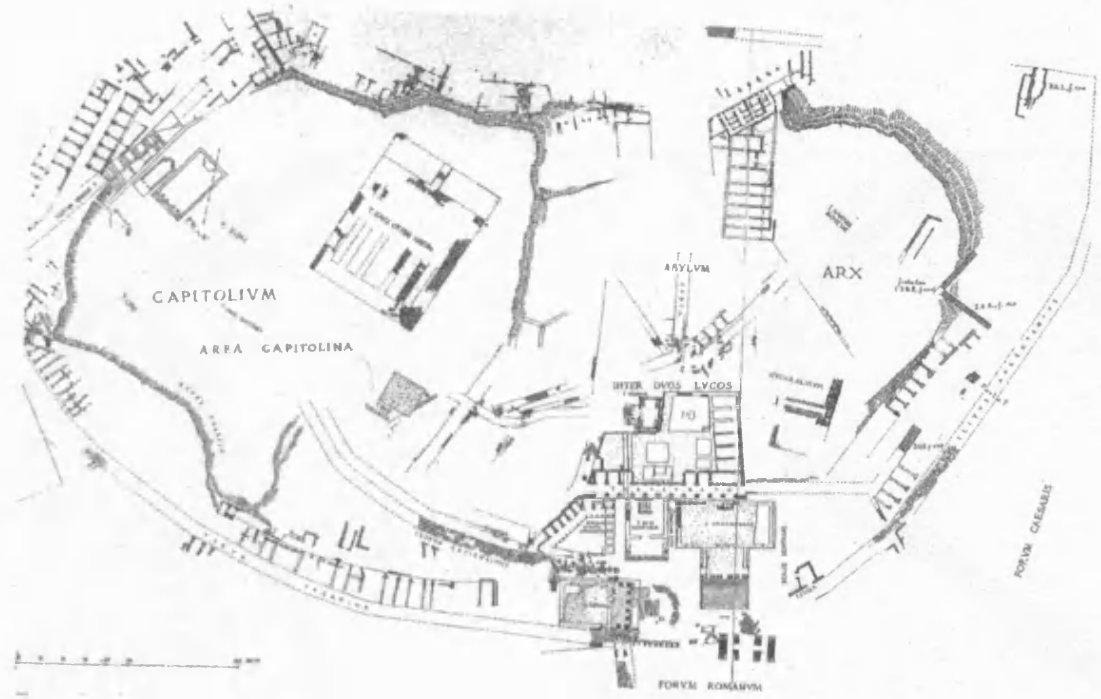

Fig. 2d. Capitoline with ancient structures (from *LTUR* after von Sydow W., *Archäologischer Anzeiger,* 1973).

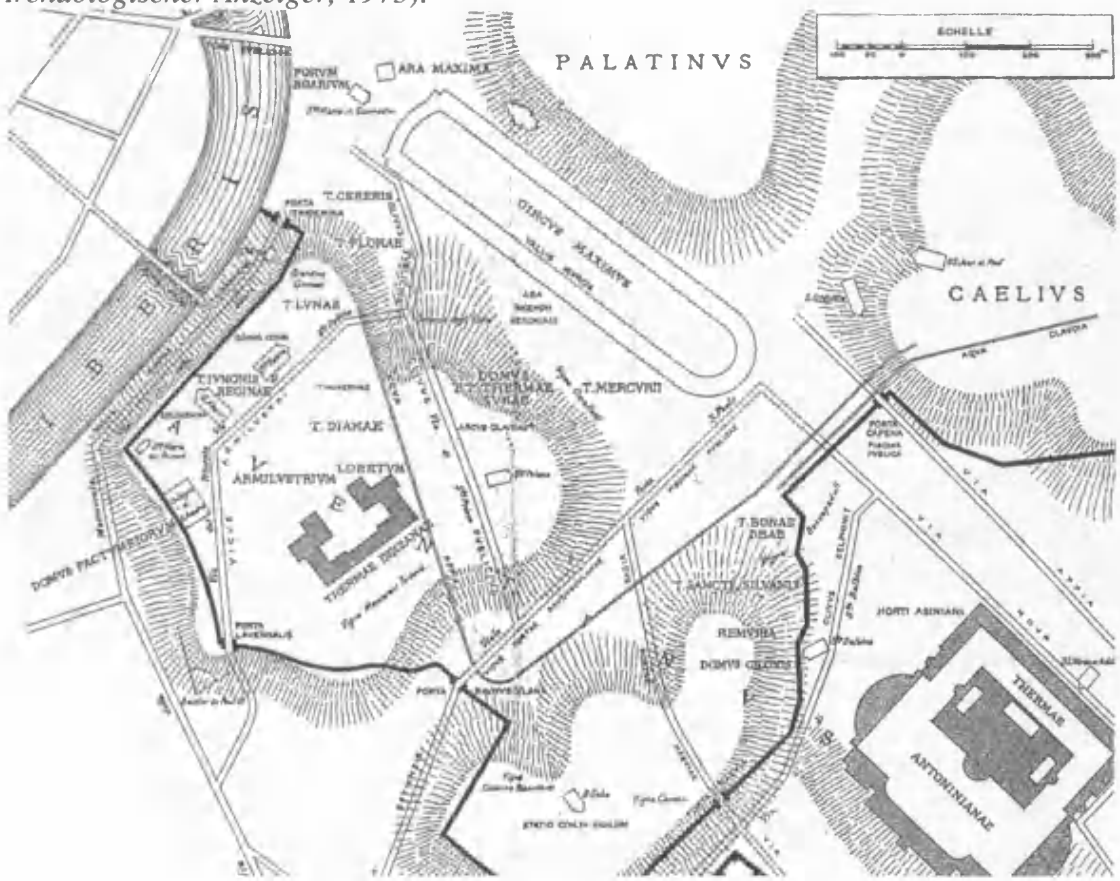

Fig. 2e. Aventine with ancient structures (from Merlin A., *L'Aventin dans l'antiquité*).

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Fig.2f. S. Maria in Trastevere & S. Callisto in context of ancient roads (from Lanciani R., *FUR*, plate 27).

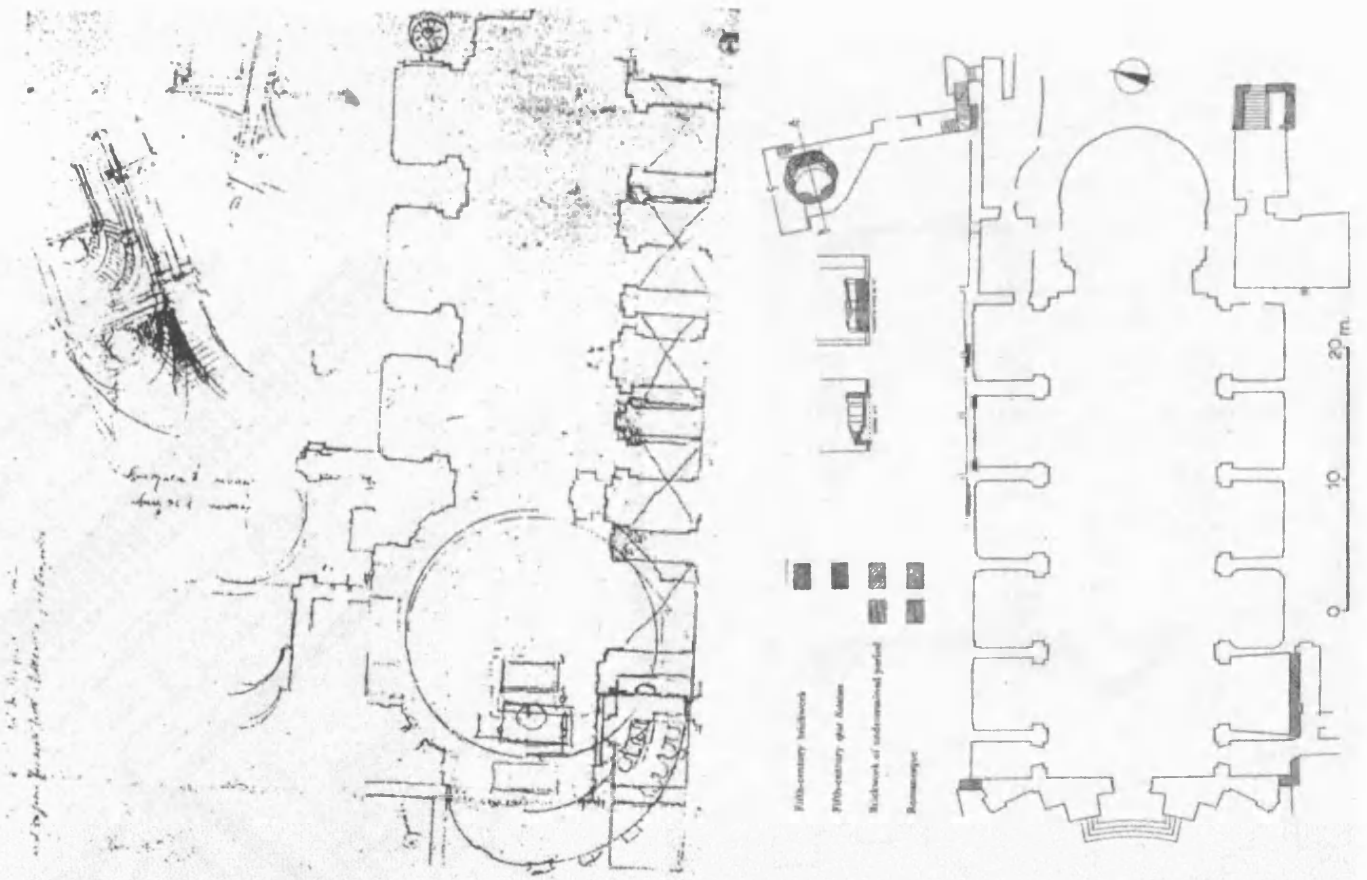

Fig.2g. S. Marcello in Corso. Pre-Sixteenth century church (left) and existing church today (right). (from a drawing by Antonio da Sangallo the Younger (1484-1546) & from *CBCR* respectively)

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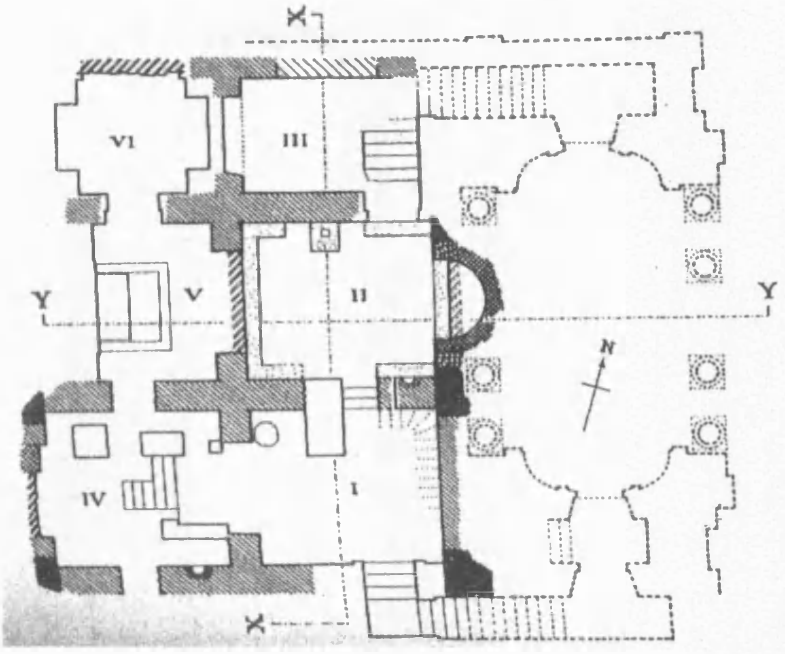

Fig. 2h. S. Maria in via Lata with remains of subterranean diaconia (left) with apsed chapel (from *CBCR*).

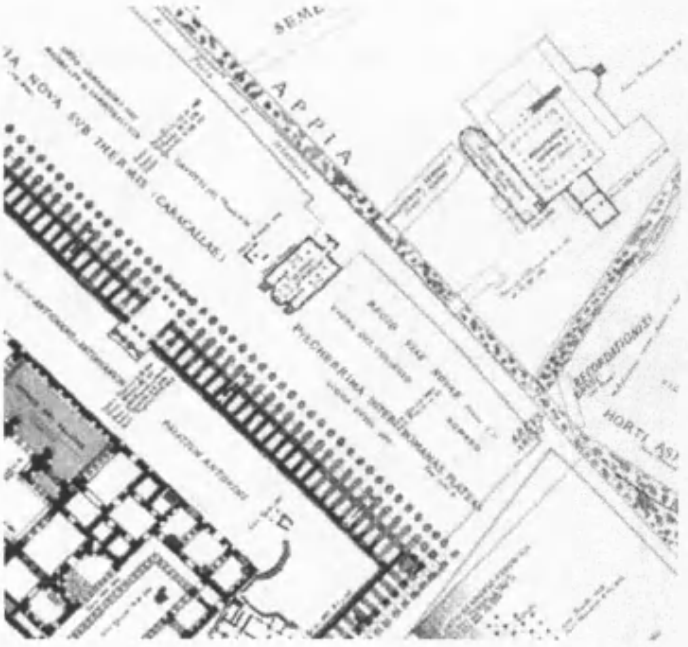

Fig. 2i. Baths of Caracalla and SS. Nereo ed Achilleo & Basilica Crescentiana (from Lanciani R., *FUR*, plate 42)

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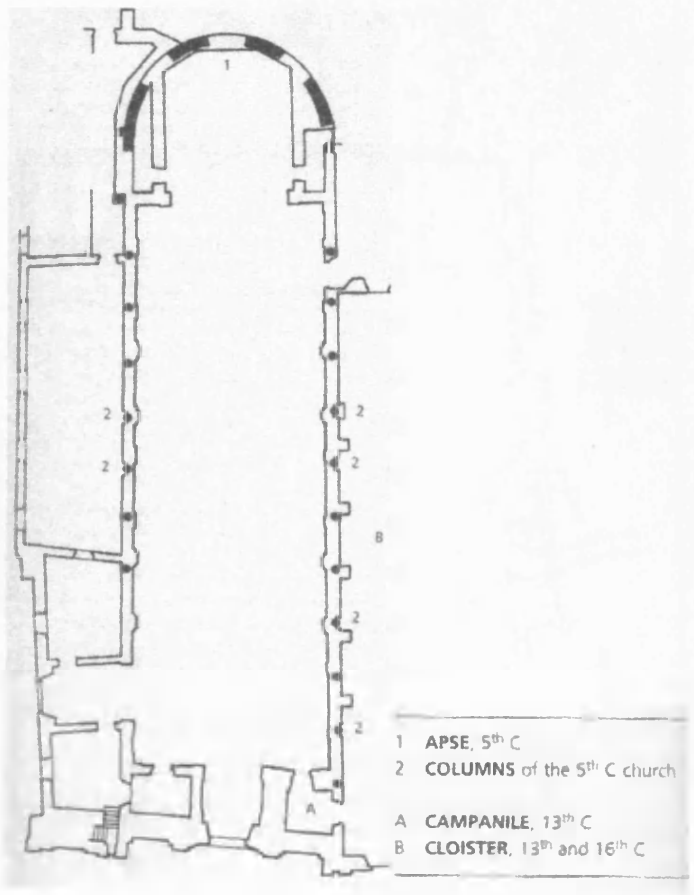

Fig. 2j. S. Sisto Vecchio (from Webb M., *Churches and Catacombs*)

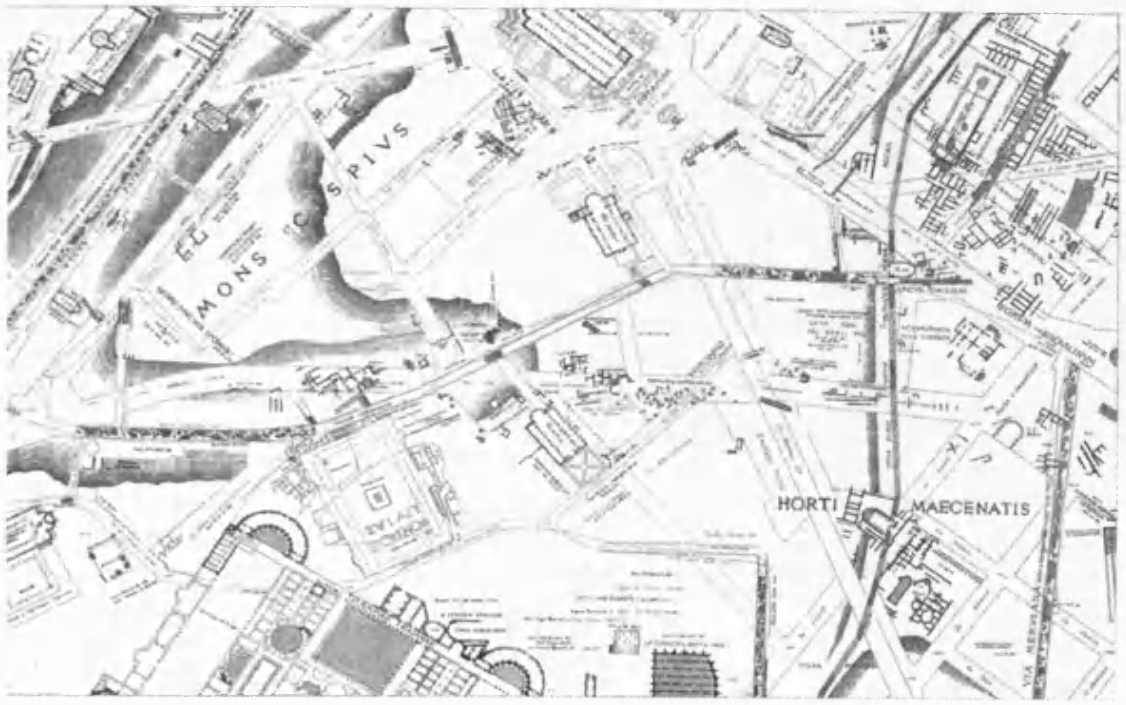

Fig 2k.(a) S. Maria Maggiore (top centre) (from Lanciani R., *FUR*, plate 23)

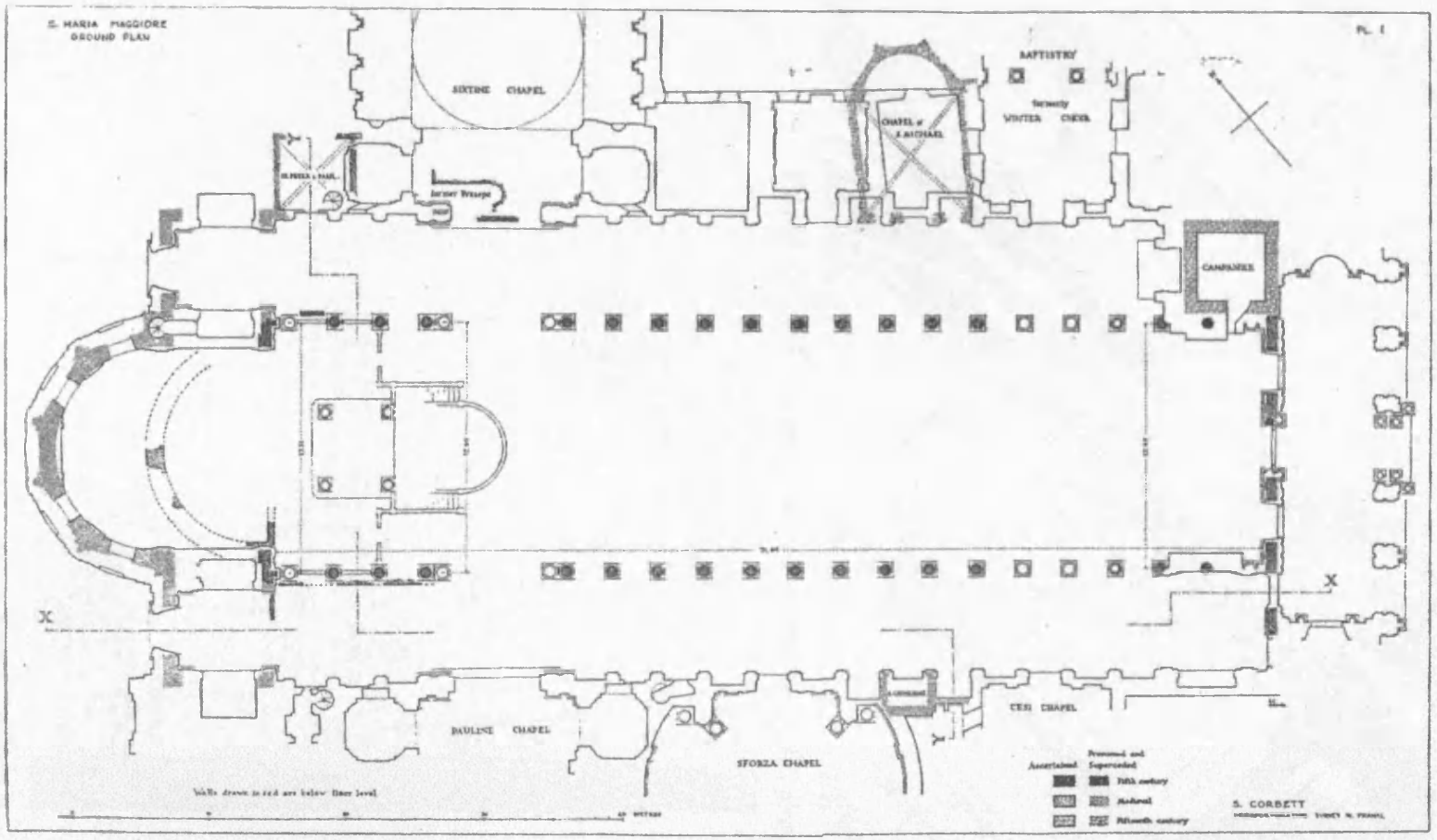

Fig 2k (b). S. Maria Maggiore (from *CBCR*)

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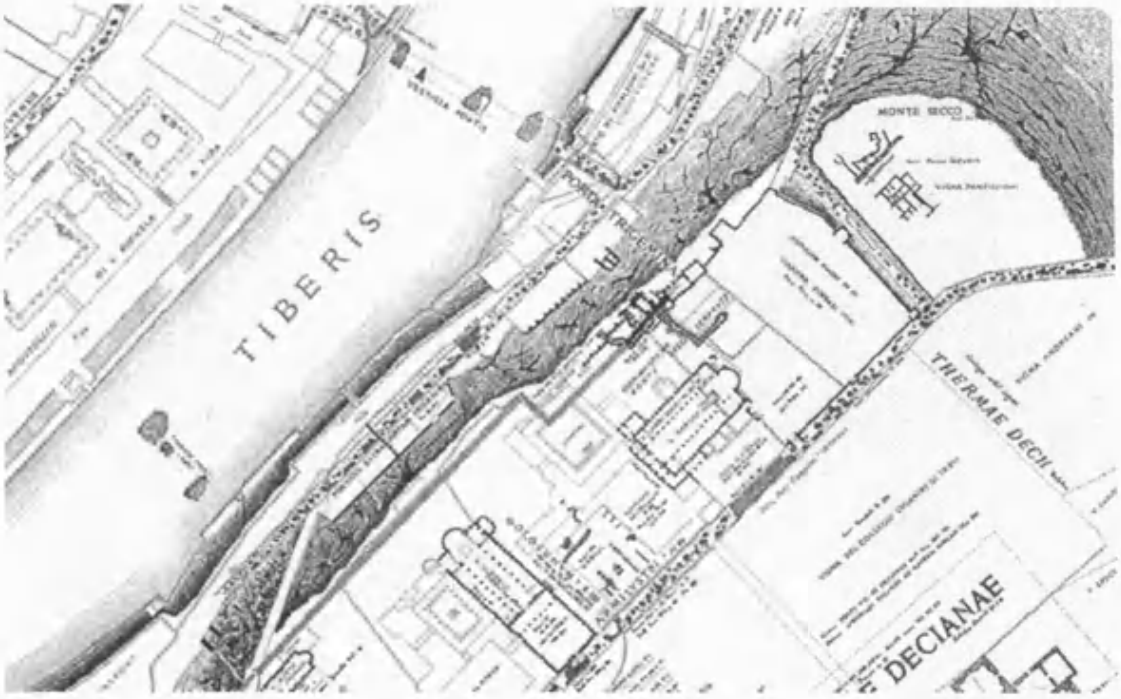

Fig. 2l. S. Sabina (centre) (from Lanciani R., *FUR*, plate 34)

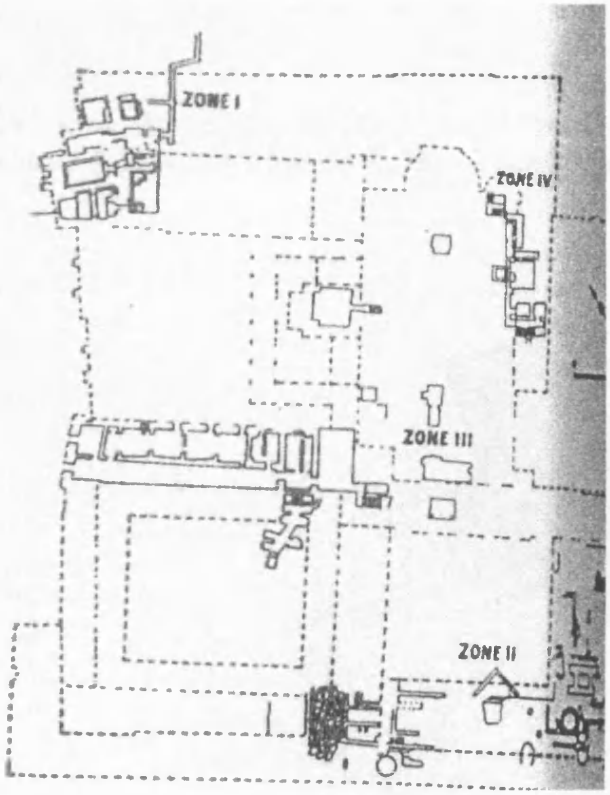

Fig.2m. S. Sabina (from Darsy F., *Santa Sabina*). Excavations around church –Zone I: Servian wall & 2nd/3rd century AD house and Iseum. Zone II: 2nd century AD building below 4th century baths which then became a quadroporticus for the church. Zone III: Remains of a 4th century house, hall or *insula*. Zone IV: Archaic temple/shrine (Temple of *Iuno Regina*?) replaced by 4th century AD *insula*.

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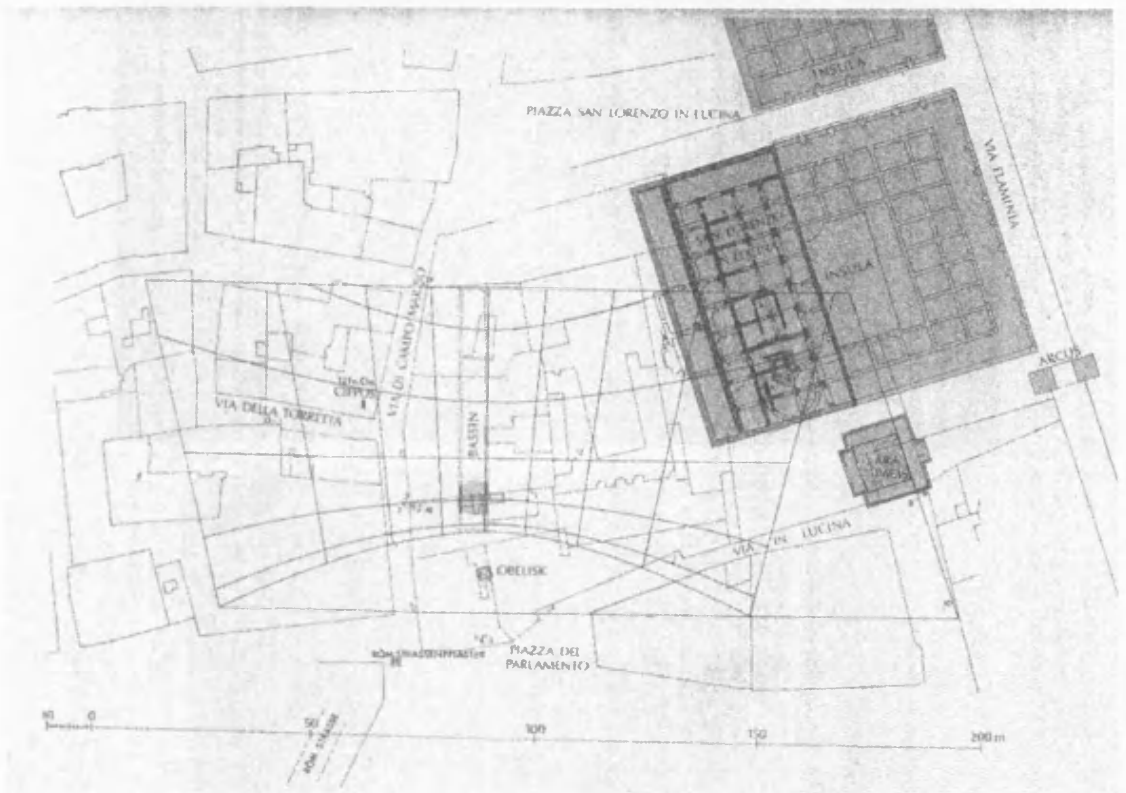
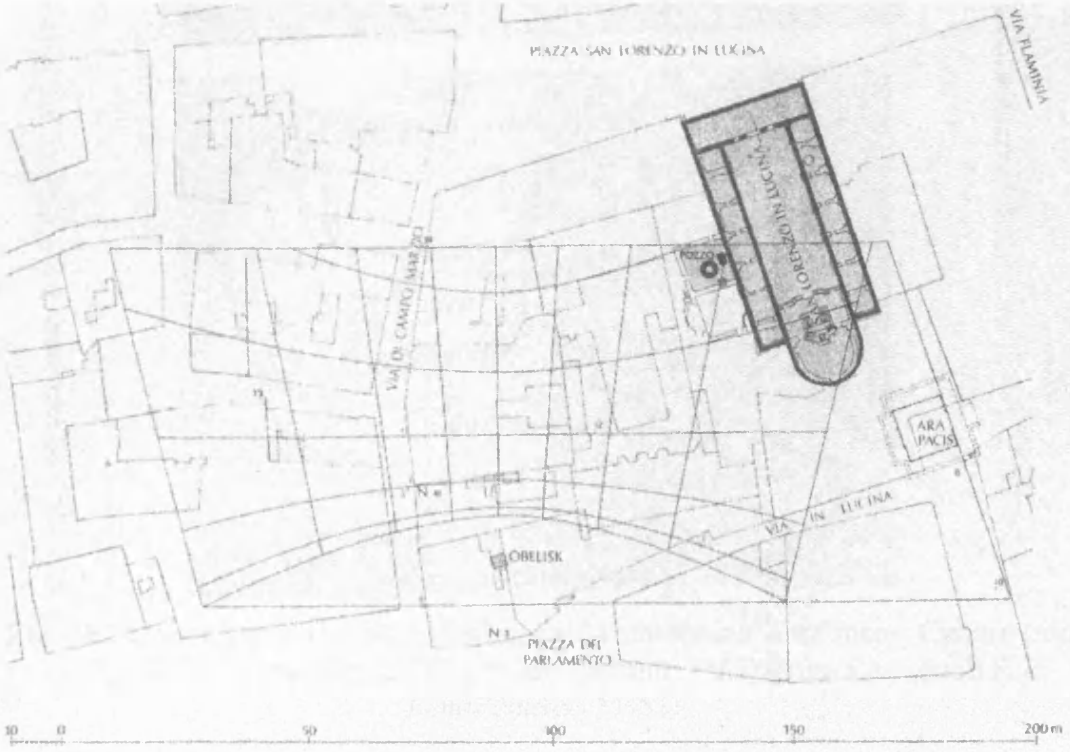


Fig. 3a. S. Lorenzo in Lucina. Pre-existing insula in area of church (above) & church in 5th century (below, from Rakob F., *Die Urbanisierung*).



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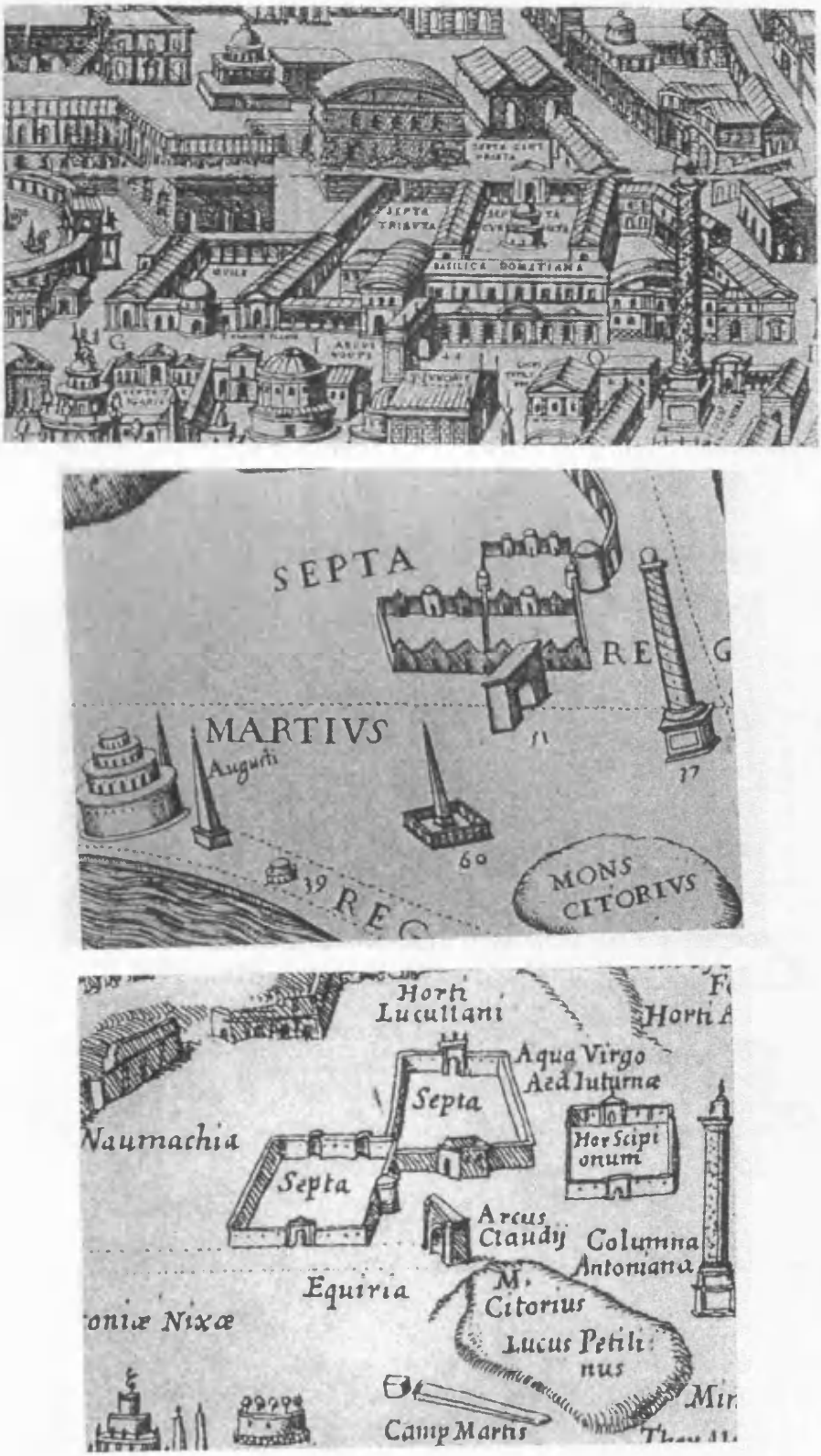

Fig. 3b. Area of Temple of Sol (looking east) from Renaissance maps: Cartaro (top, 1579), Du Pérac (middle, 1573), Ligorio (bottom, 1553) (from Castagnoli F. in *RendPontAcc.* 51-52).

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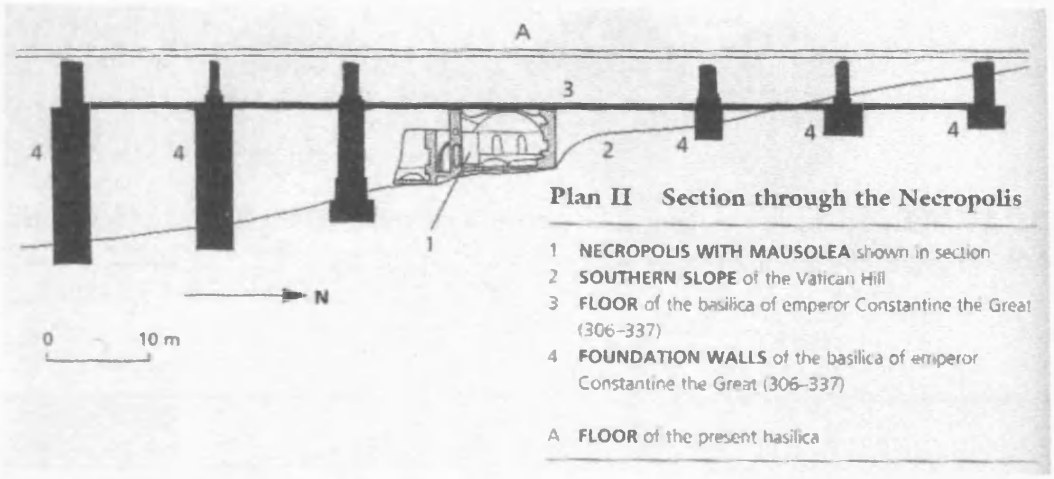

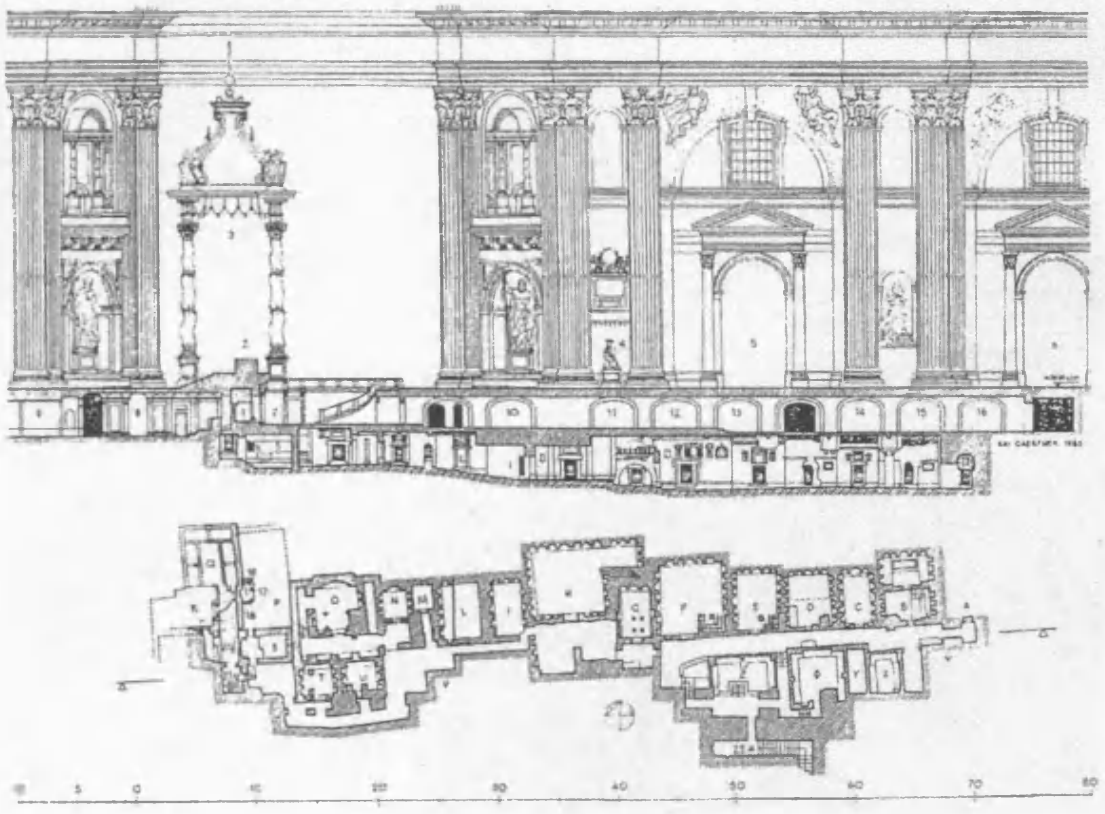

Fig. 3c. St. Peter's. Section looking west (above, from Webb M., *Churches and Catacombs*) with section and plan of necropolis looking north (below, from Liverani P., *La Topografia*).

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Fig. 3d. Coins of Constantine with obverses of Sol (from left to right *RIC* VI. 227 n.892, VI. 228 n.899, VII. 236 n.22, VII. 250 n.164 – photos from Mattingly H., *Roman Coins*).

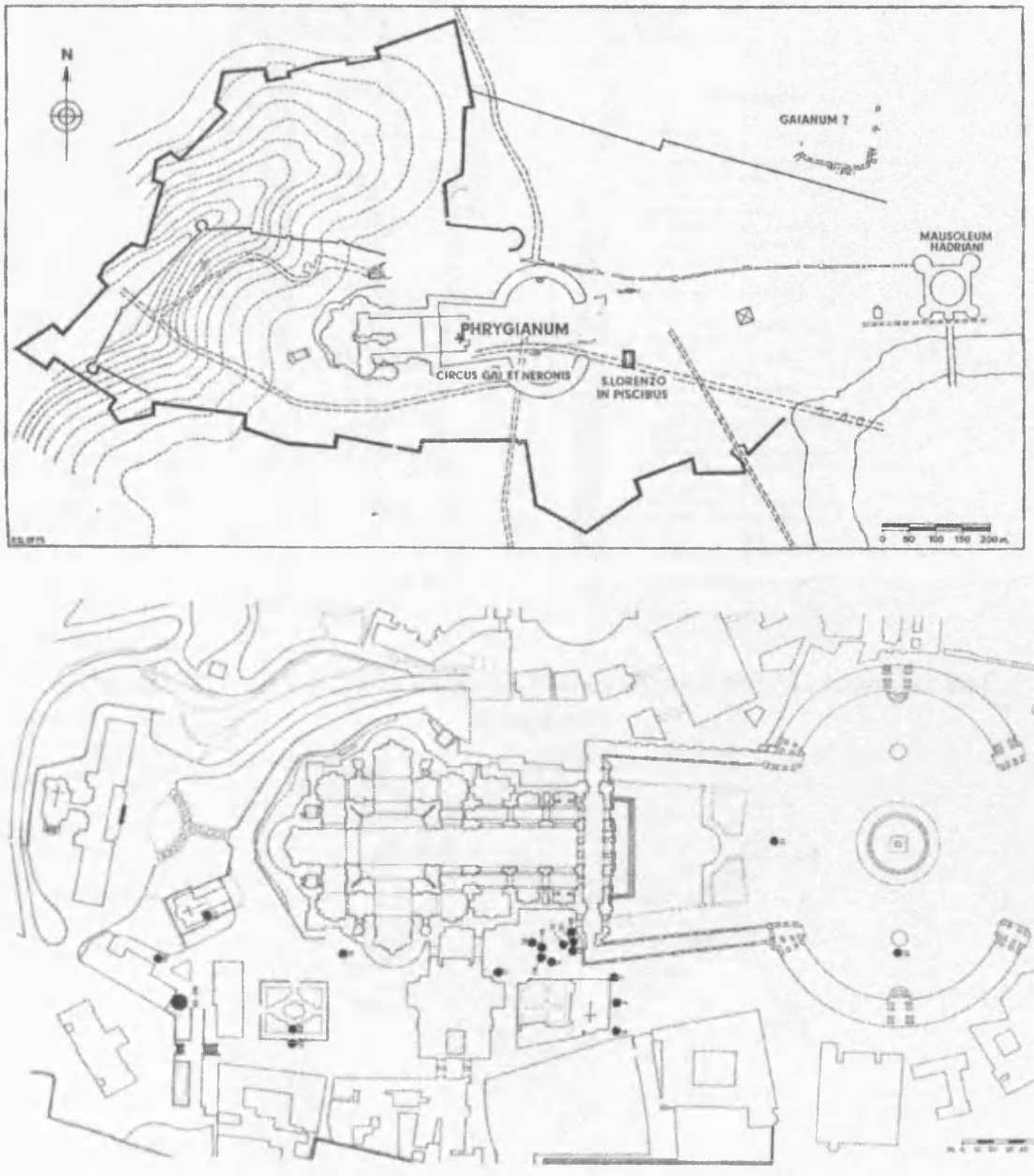

Fig. 3e. Phrygianum. Estimated location in relation to St. Peter's (above, from Vermaseren M.J., *Corpus Cultus*) and location of Magna Mater finds (below, from Liverani P., *La Topografia*).

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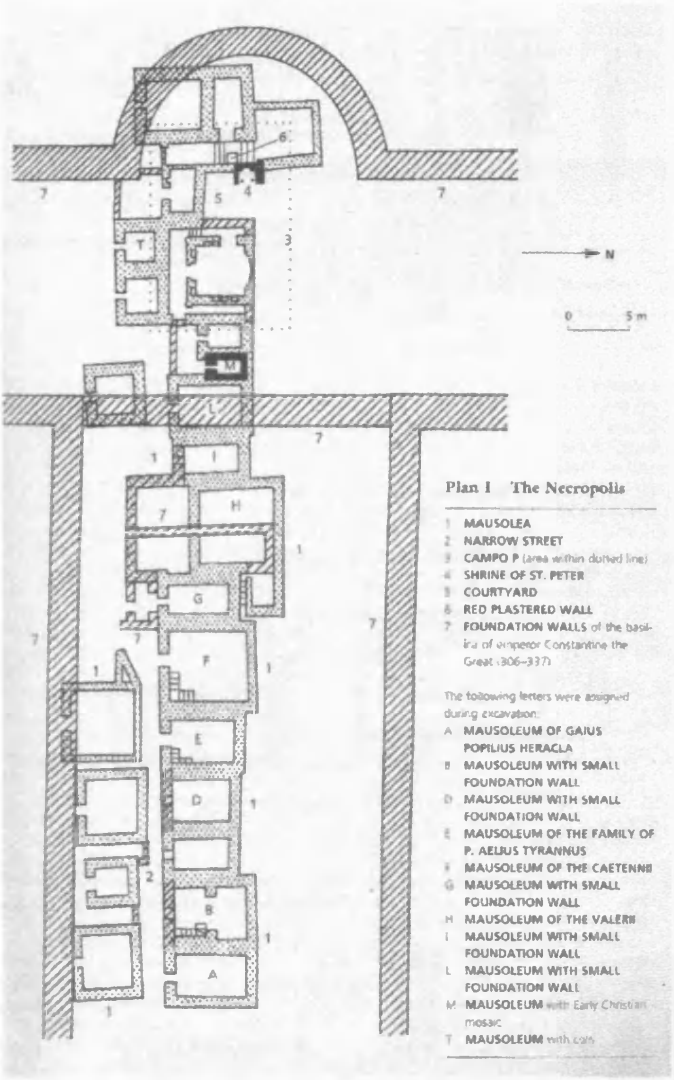

Fig. 3f. Plan of Necropolis under St. Peter's (from Webb M., *Churches and Catacombs*).

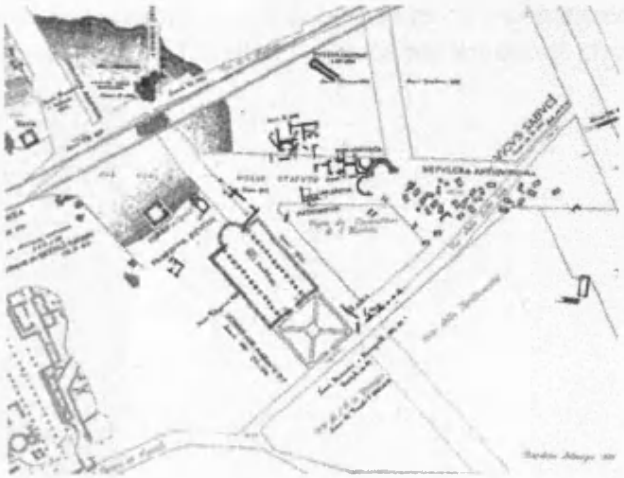

Fig. 3g. S. Martino ai Monti with nearby Iseum/Mithraeum (from Lanciani R., *FUR*, plate 23).

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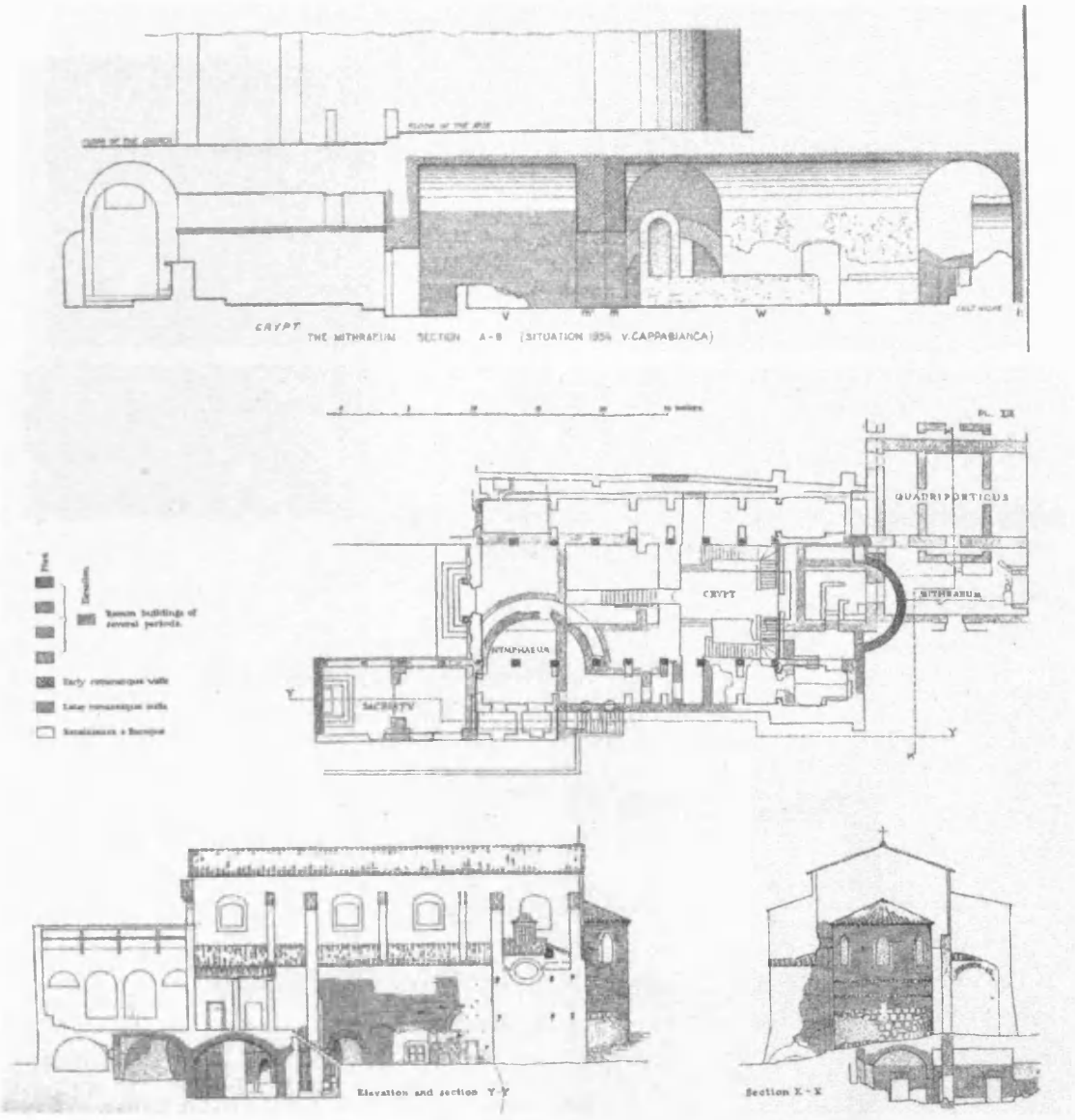

Fig. 3h. S. Prisca and Mithraeum. Section (above from Vermaseren M.J. & van Essen C.C., *S. Prisca*) and sections and plan of substructures (from *CBCR*).

Fig. 3i. Mithraeum of S. Prisca. Cult niche (from Nash E., *Pictoral Dictionary*).

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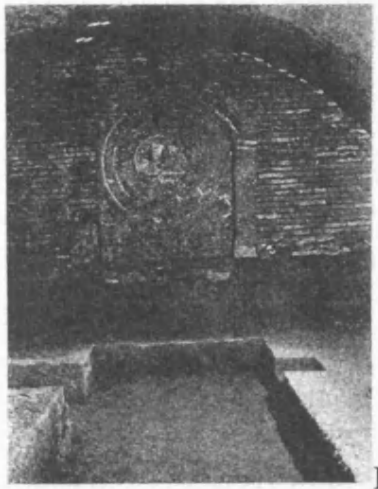

Fig. 3j. Mithraeum of S. Prisca. 'Sol' room niche (from Nash E., *Pictorial Dictionary*).

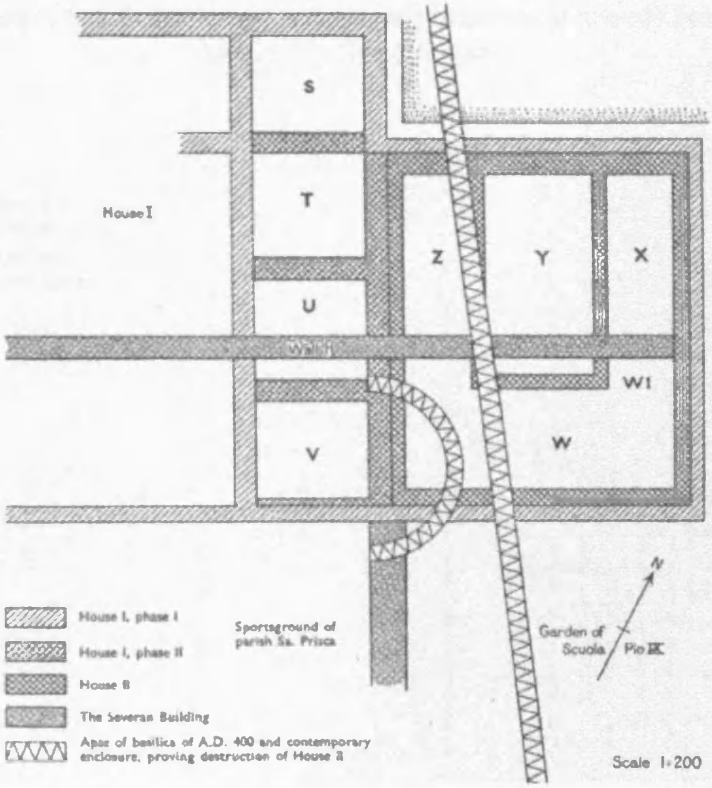

Fig. 3k. Houses and 'Severan Building' beneath S. Prisca (from Vermaseren M.J. & van Essen C.C., *S. Prisca*).

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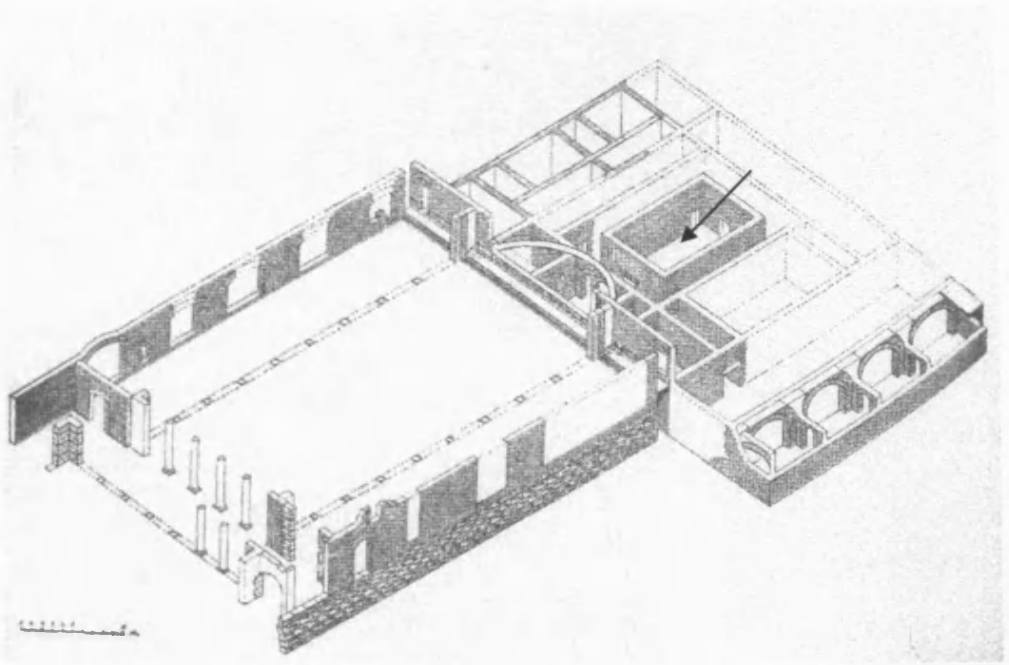

Fig. 3l. S. Clemente with substructures and Mithraeum (arrowed) below apse (from Junyent E., *San Clemente*).

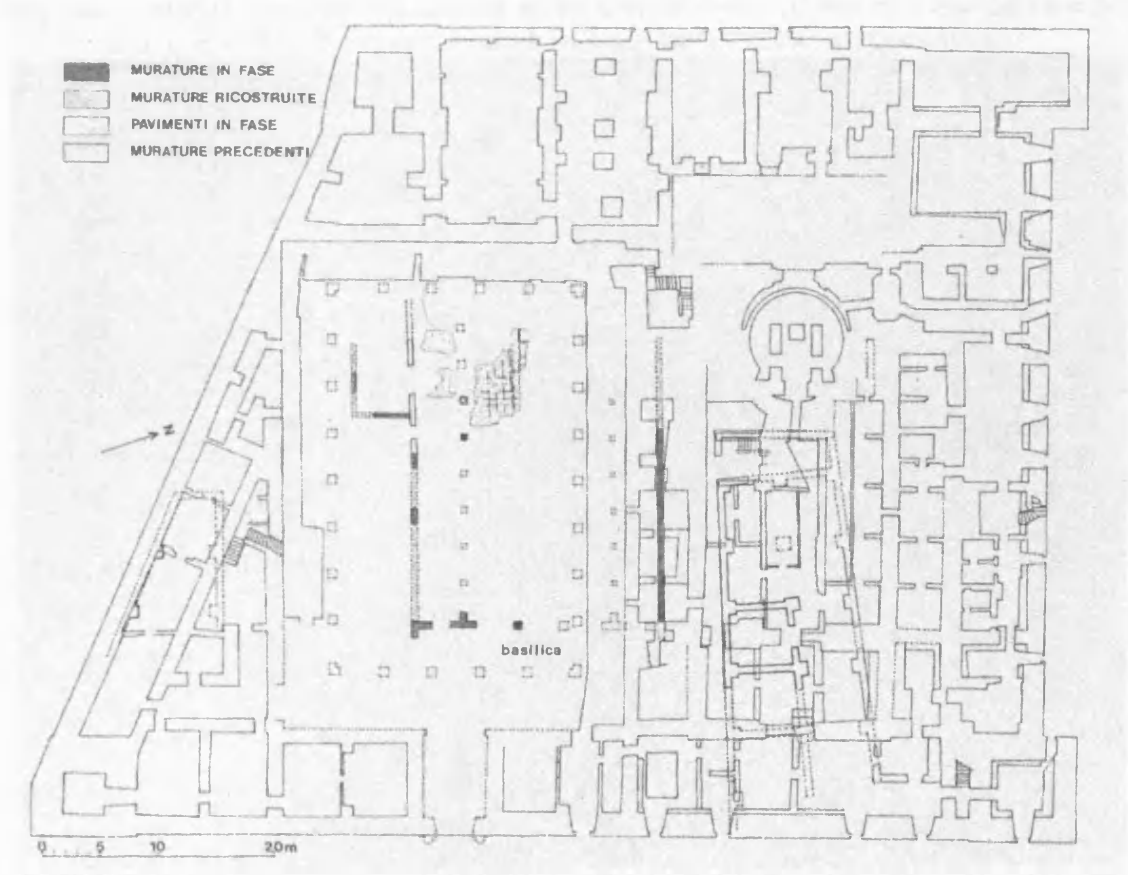

Fig. 3m. S. Lorenzo in Damaso. Fourth century remains beneath courtyard of Palazzo della Cancelleria (from *LTUR*).

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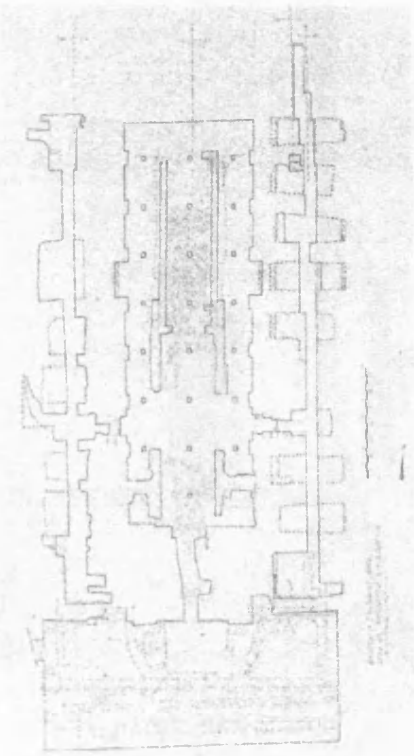

Fig. 3n. S. Marco. Excavations (above, from Cecchelli M., *S. Marco a Piazza Venezia*) and apse of fourth century church looking west (below, author's photo).

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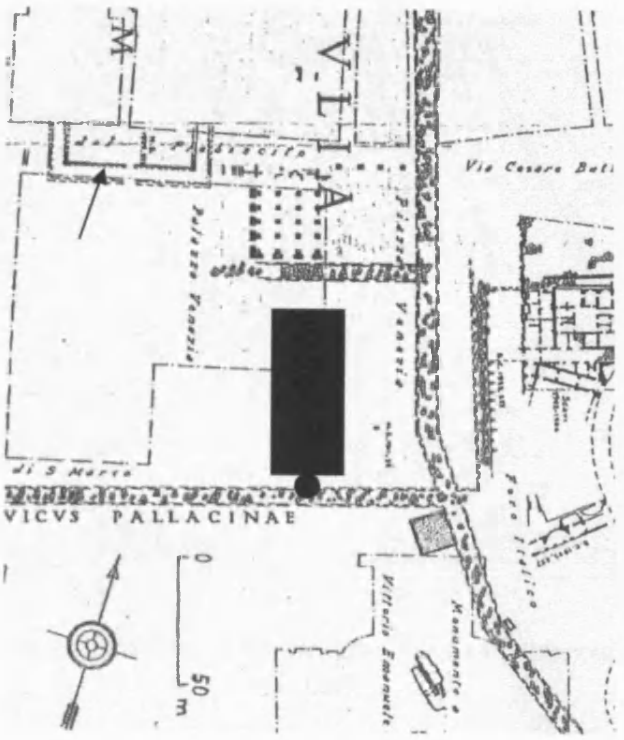

Fig.3o. (i) Remains of Altar of Mars (u-shaped feature on Via del Plebescito – arrowed) and S. Marco (in black) (adapted from Gatti G., ''Saepta Iulia' e 'Porticus Aemilia' nella 'Forma' Severiana' in *Bcom* 62).

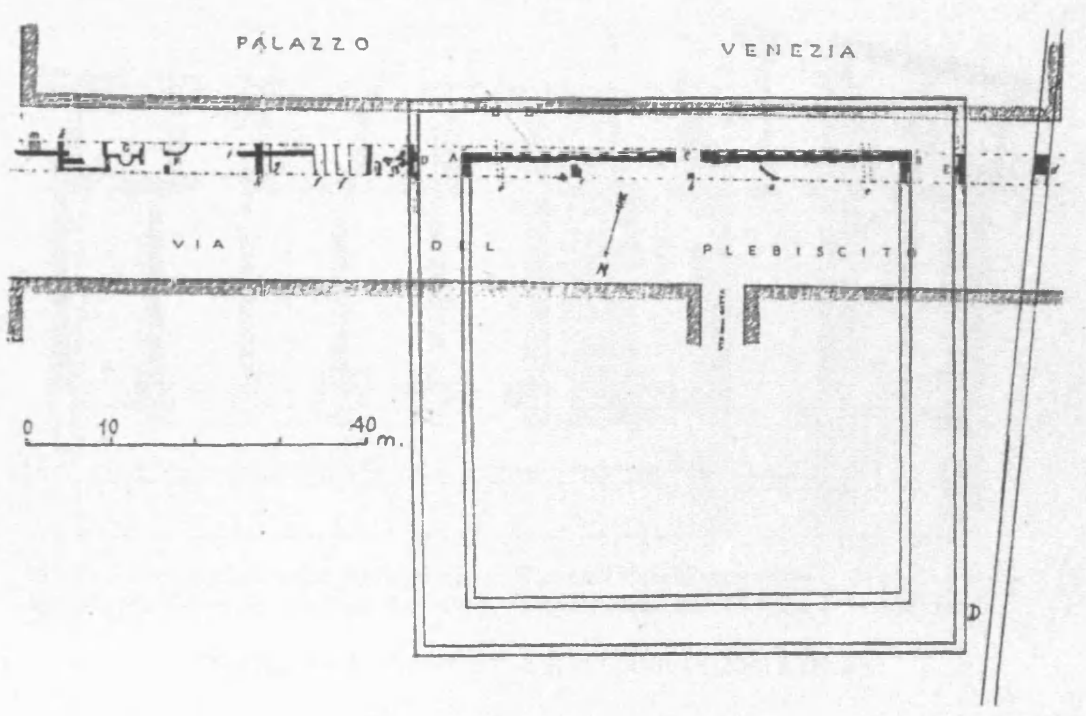

Fig. 3o (ii) Remains of Altar of Mars with hypothetical reconstruction of rest of monument by Coarelli F. (from *LTUR*).

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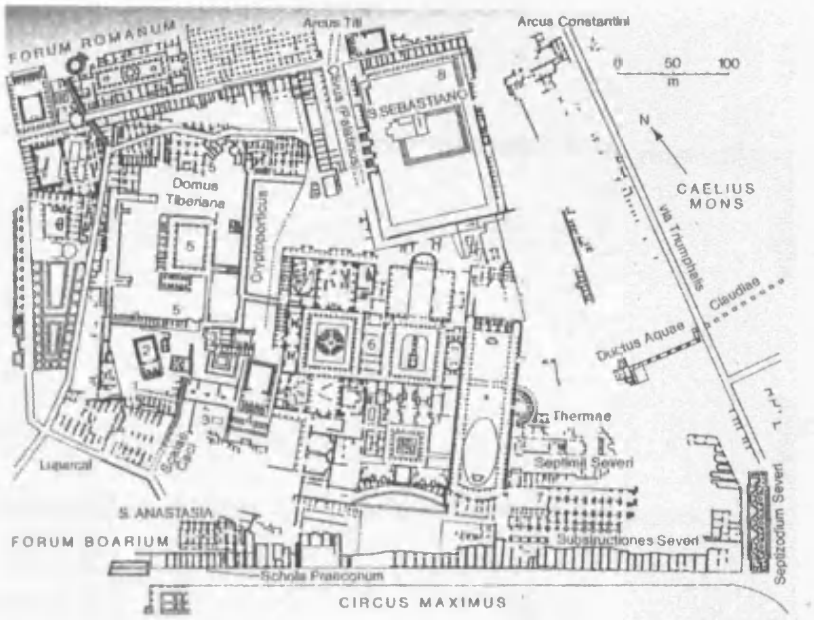

Fig. 3p. S. Anastasia and Palatine with presumed site of *Lupercal* (from Coarelli F., *Guida*).

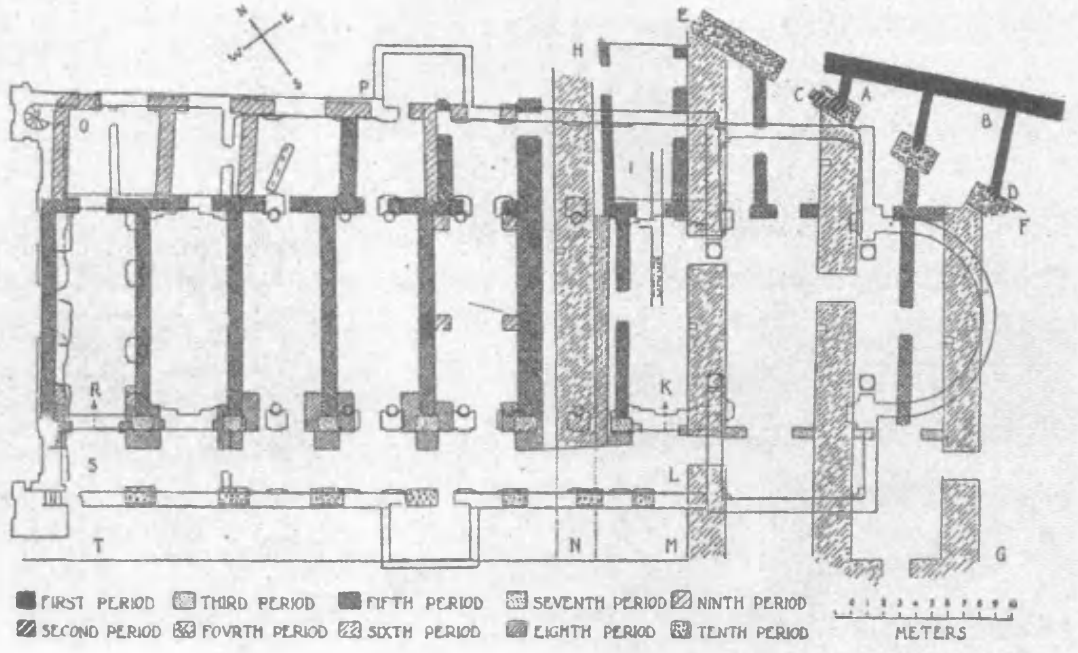

Fig.3q. (i) S. Anastasia. Substructures (from *CBCR*).

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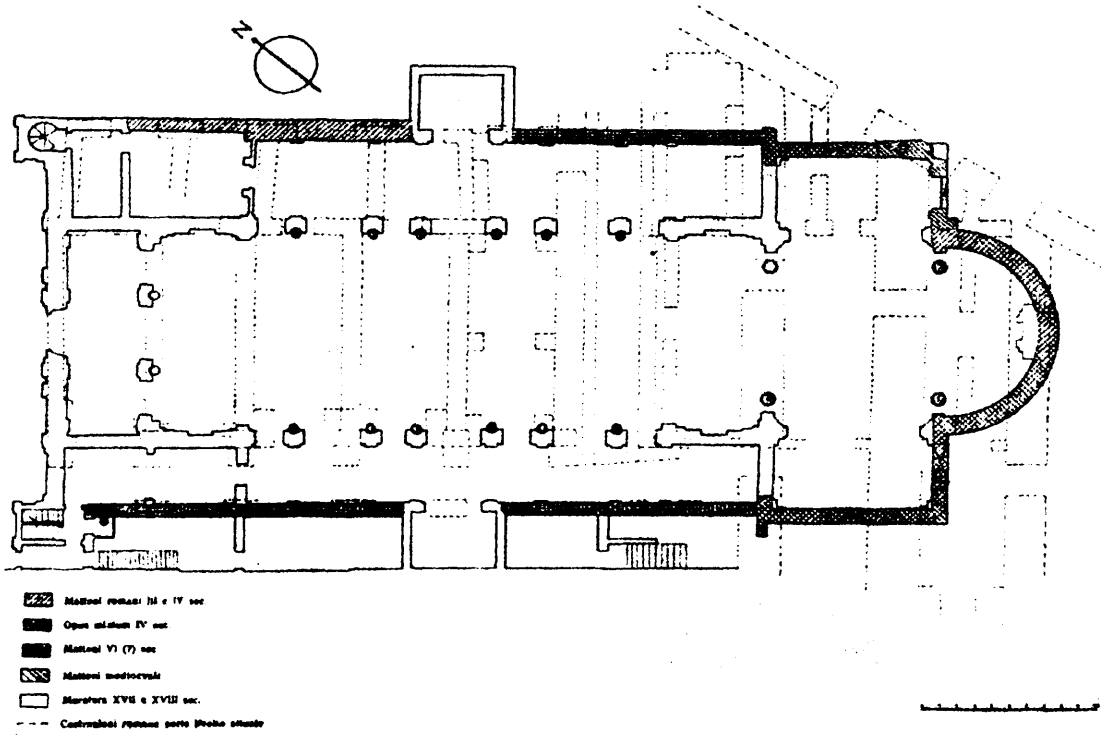

Fig.3q. (ii) S. Anastasia. Later substructures (from *CBCR*).

Fig.4a. Temple of Sol et Luna and Circus Maximus. Coin of Trajan (*RIC* II. 284 n.571).

Fig. 4b. (i) Statue of Magna Mater (riding lion) on spina of a Circus (Gerona mosaic after Curran J.R., *Pagan City*).

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Fig. 4b (ii) Part of a sarcophagus from Foligno showing Circus Maximus. Statue of figure riding horse/lion (?) at same location as above (after Magi F., *Il circo Vaticano*).

Fig. 4c. Shrine of *Murcia* in the circus. Relief from Foligno (after Humphrey J., *Roman Circuses*).

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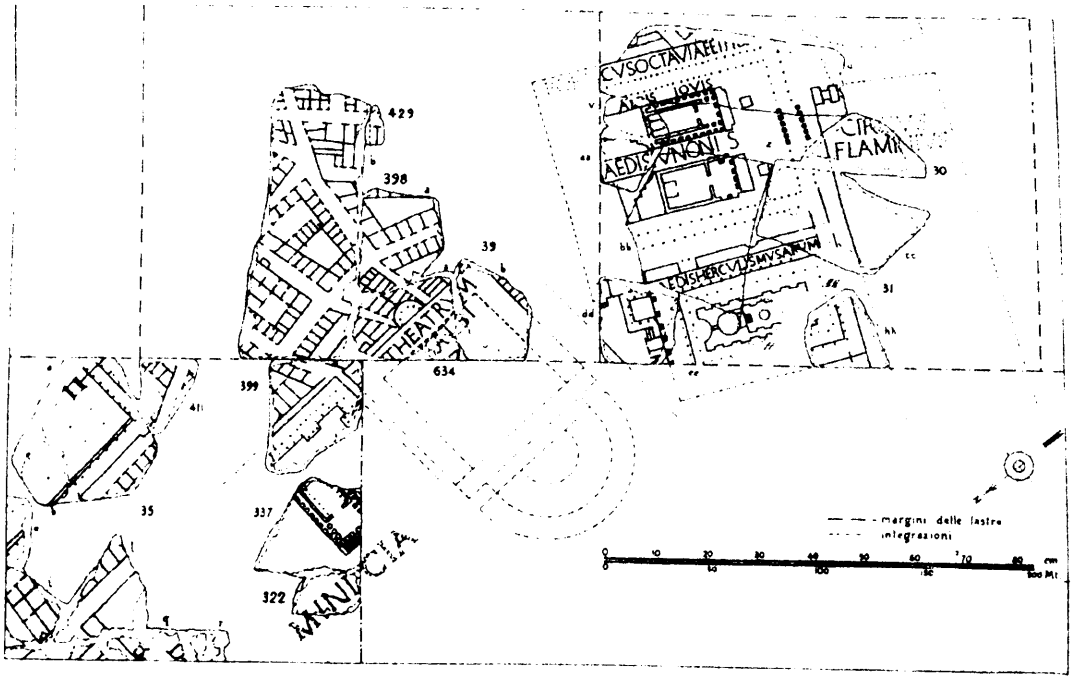

Fig. 4d. Circus Flaminius on Marble Plan (from Gatti G., *Topografia*).

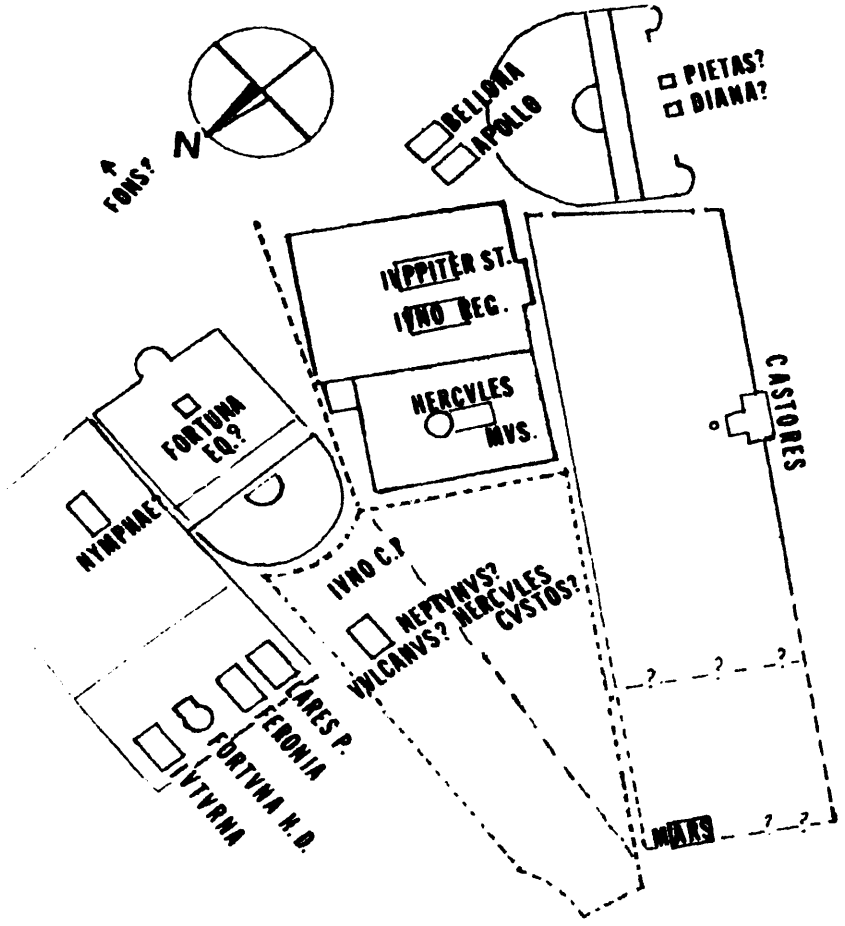

Fig. 4e. (i) Circus Flaminius and surrounding temples (from Rodríguez-Almeida E., 'Diversi problemi' in *RendPontAcc.* 64).

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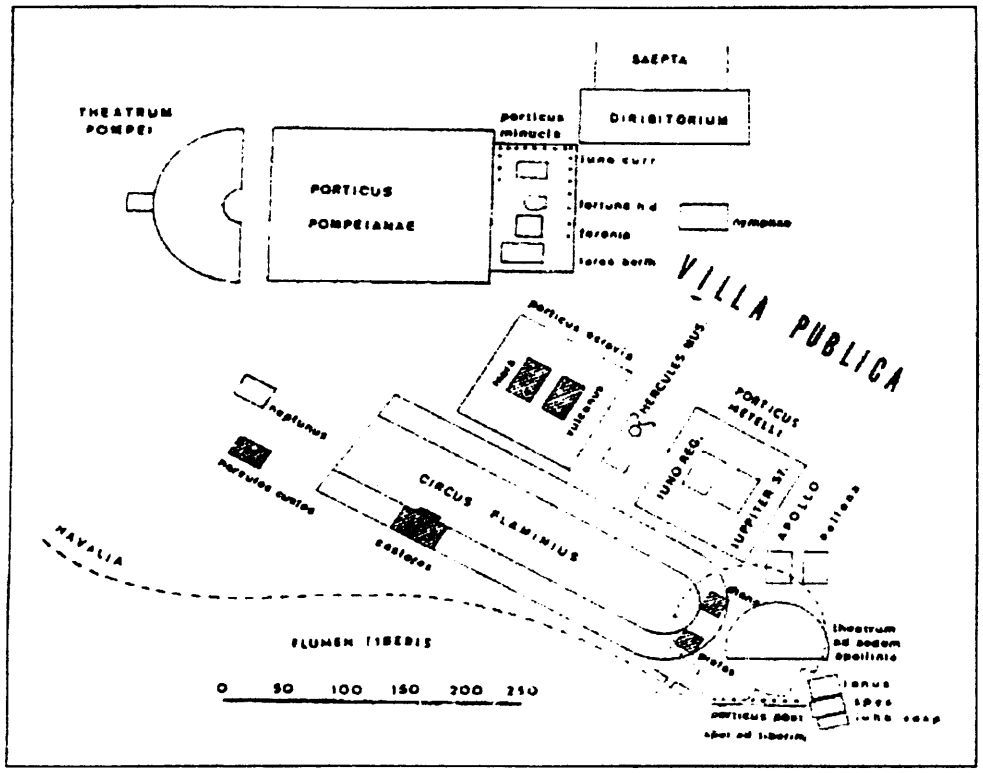

Fig. 4e (ii) Circus Flaminius and temples (from *LTUR* after Coarelli F., *DialA* 2 (1968)).

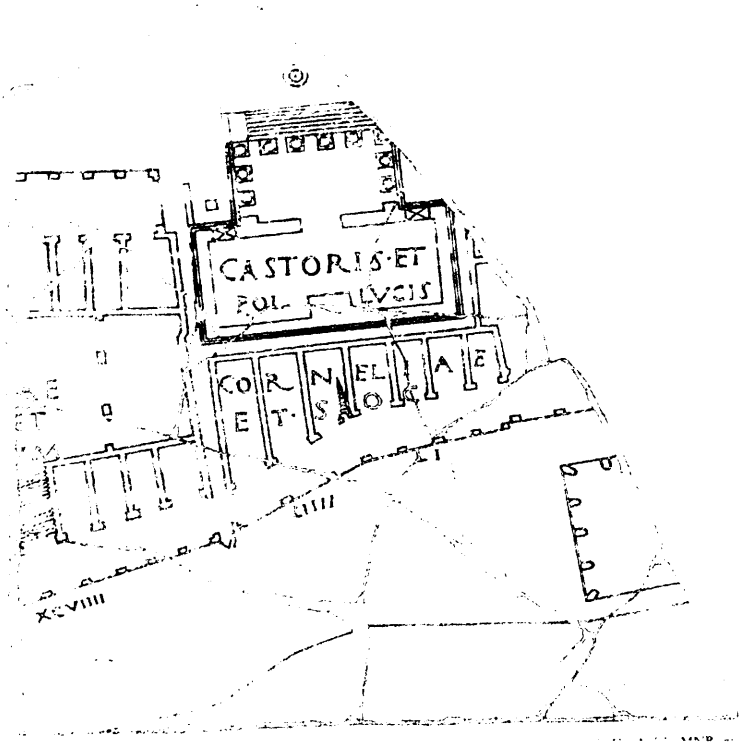

Fig. 4f. Temple of Castor and Pollux *in circo*. Reproduction from Marble Plan (from Conticello de'Spagnolis M., *Il tempio dei Dioscuri*).

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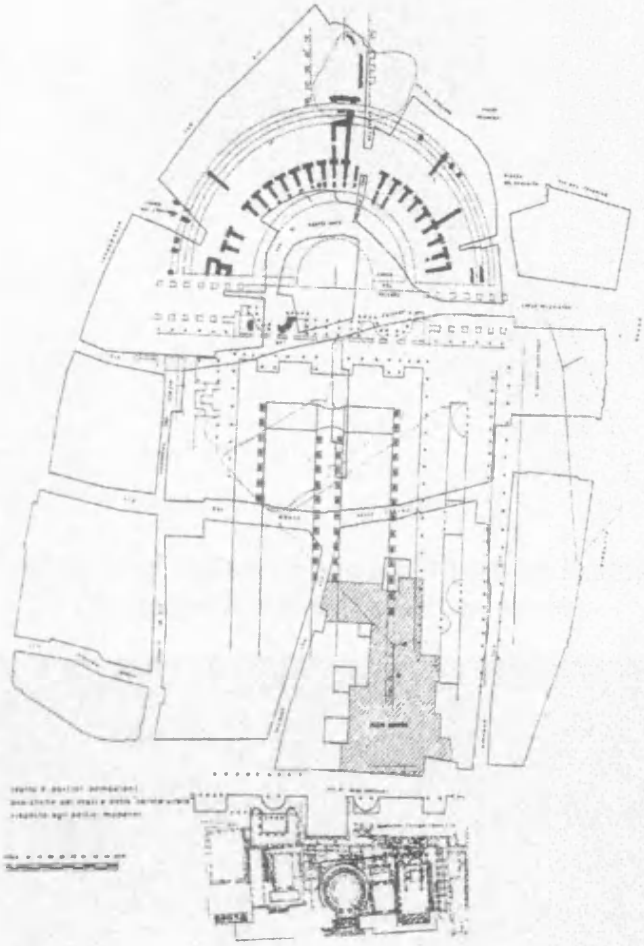

Fig. 4g. Theatre and Portico of Pompey. Elongated structure in the centre of the theatre's *cavea*, with a feature that extends beyond it, is likely to be the Temple of Venus Victrix (from Coarelli F., *Campo Marzio*).

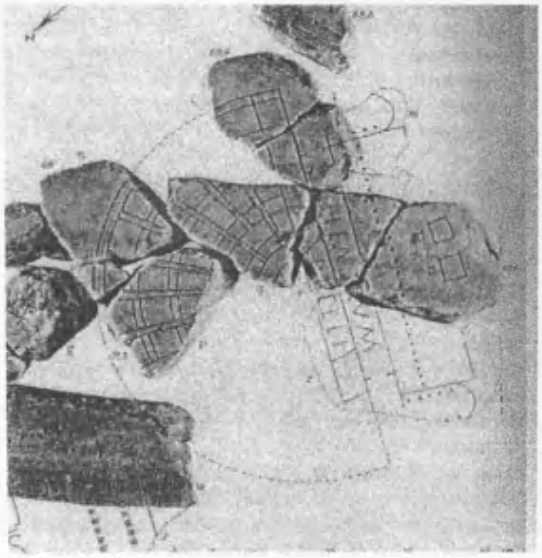

Fig. 4h. Theatre of Marcellus on Marble Plan.

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Fig. 4i. Theatre and Crypt of Balbus on Marble Plan (from Rodríguez-Almeida E., 'Diversi problemi' in *RendPontAcc.* 64).

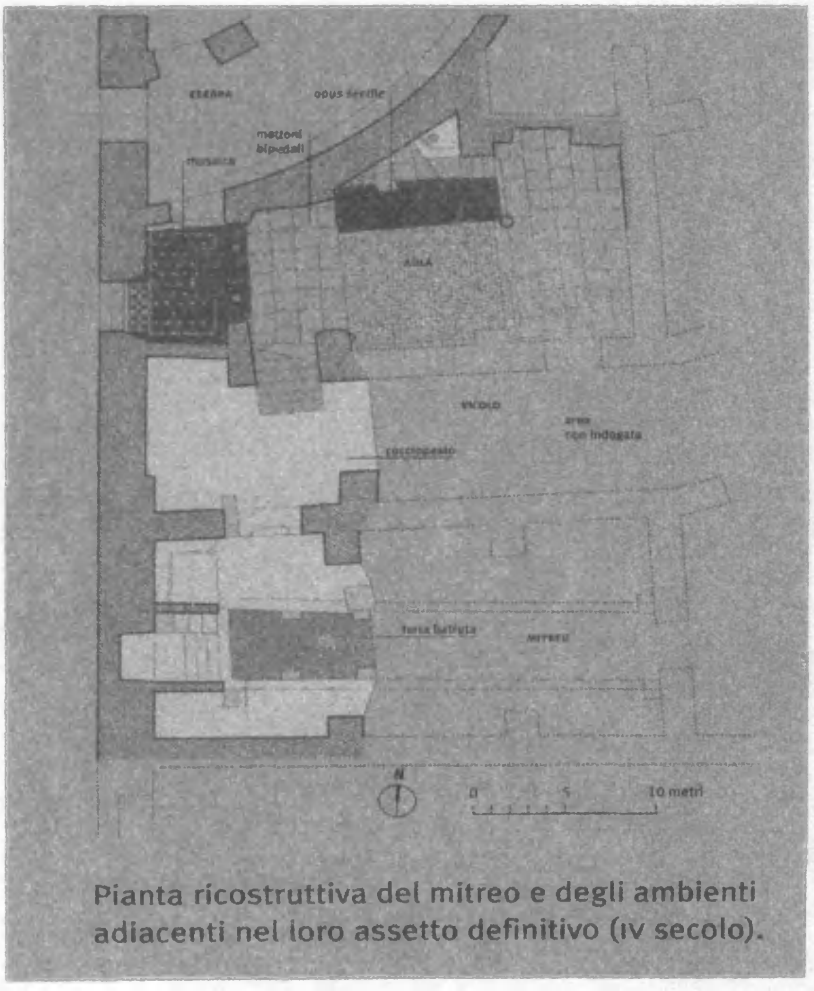

Fig. 4j. Excavations south of Crypta Balbi *exedrae* (from www.uhu.es/ejms/CryptaBalbi/pianta).

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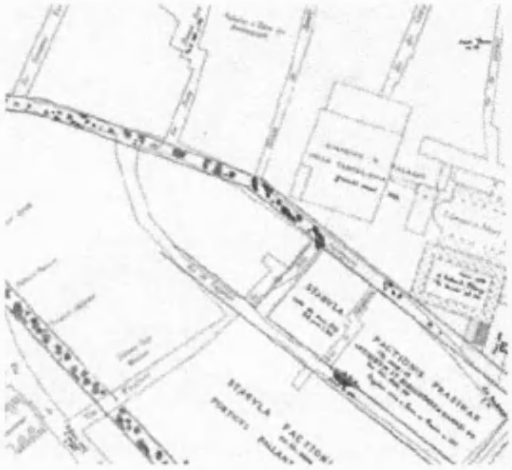


Fig. 4k. S. Lorenzo in Damaso and believed location of stables of Green faction. The fourth century basilica (not shown) was to the south of the current church so nearer the stables (from Lanciani R., *FUR*, plate 20).

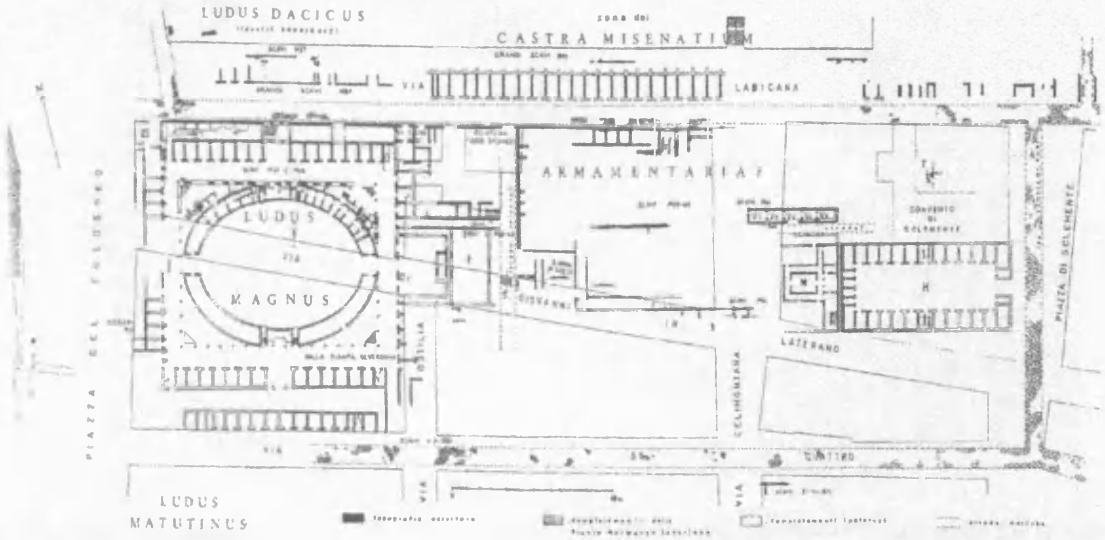
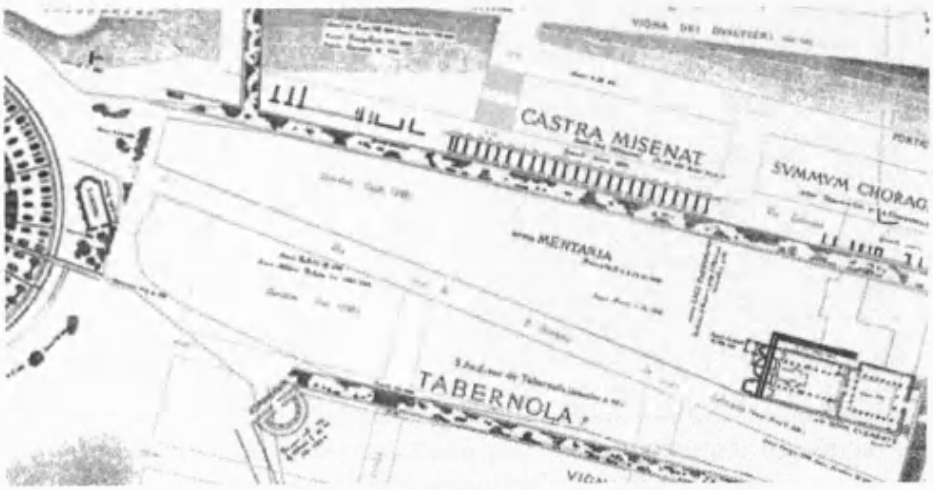


Fig. 4l. S. Clemente & 'Colosseum' with gladiator schools. Church is marked 'H' above (from Guidobaldi F., *Complesso archeologico di San Clemente* (above) & Lanciani R., *FUR*, plate 30 (below)).



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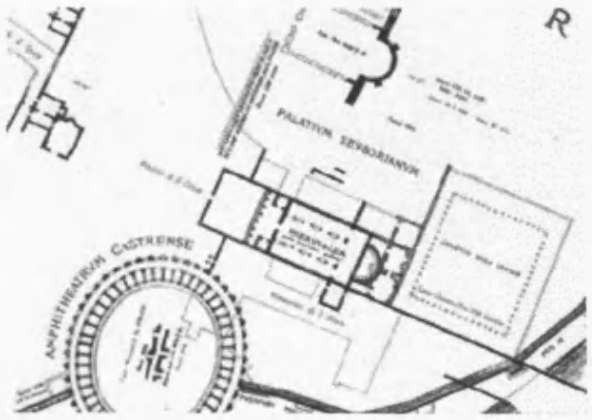

Fig. 4m. S. Croce and *Amphitheatrum Castrense* (from Lanciani R., *FUR,* plate 32).

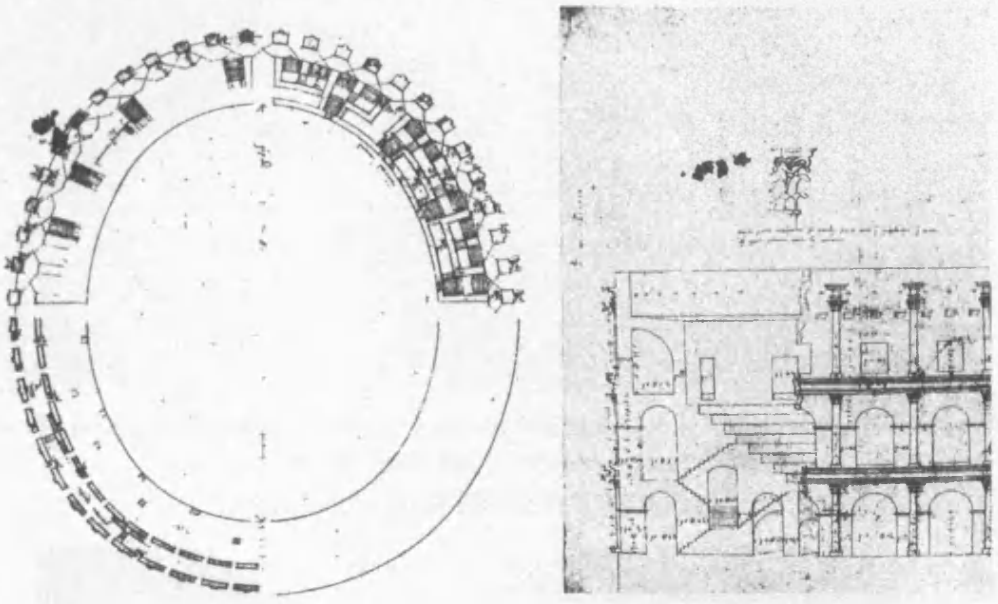

Fig. 4n. Renaissance drawings by Palladio of the *Amphitheatrum Castrense* showing how it was still largely intact at that time (from Zorzi G., *I disegni delle antichità di Andrea Palladio*).

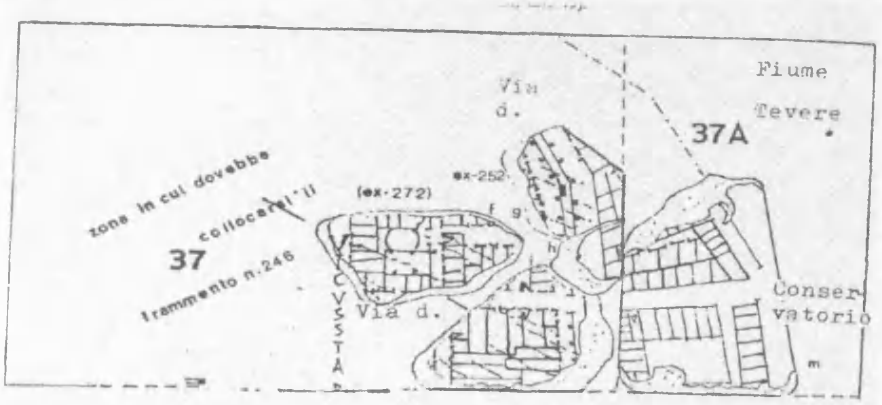

Fig. 5a. The *quattuor balnea* in the southern Campus Martius? (Martial 5.70) (from Rodríguez-Almeida E., 'Due note marzialiane: I "balnea quattuor in campo" e le "sellae Paterclianae" subcapitoline', *MEFRA* 101.1).

Figures

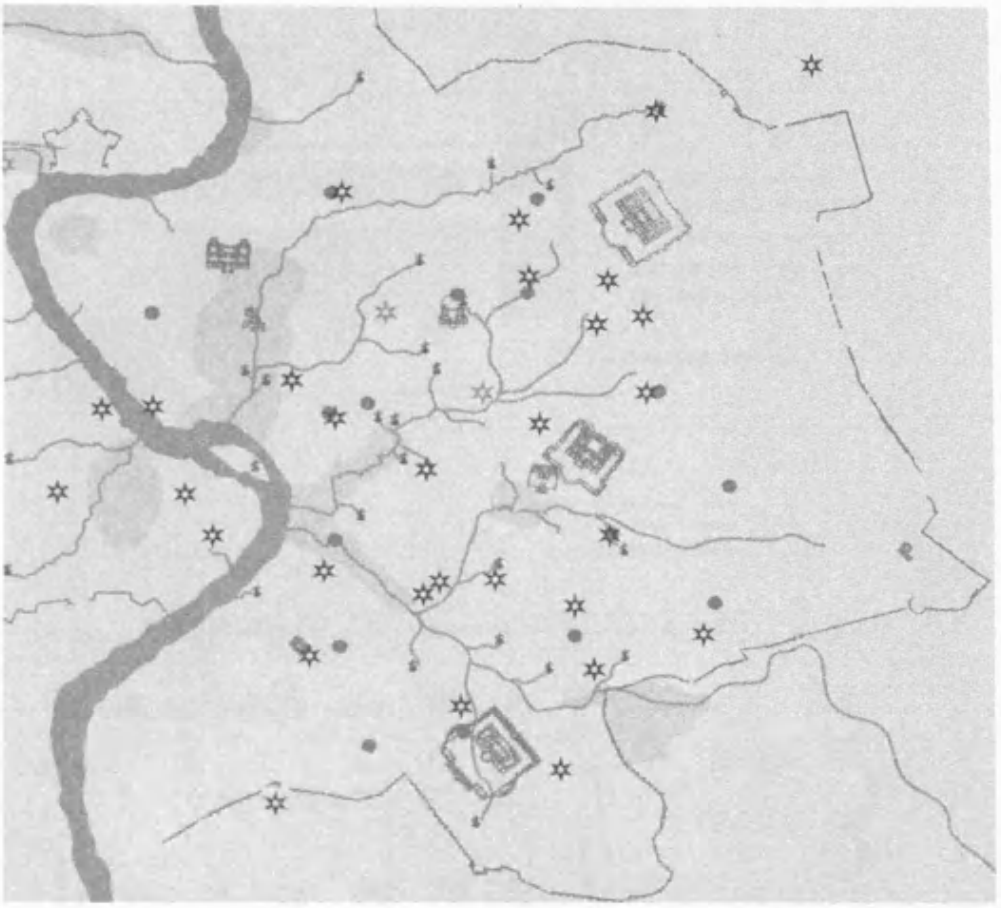

Fig. 5b. Hydrological map of Rome. Dots are Mithraea with known locations and stars are balnea that have been located (created from www.iath.virginia.edu/waters/first.html).

Fig. 5c. Mithraeum in the Baths of Caracalla (from Nash E., *Pictorial Dictionary*).

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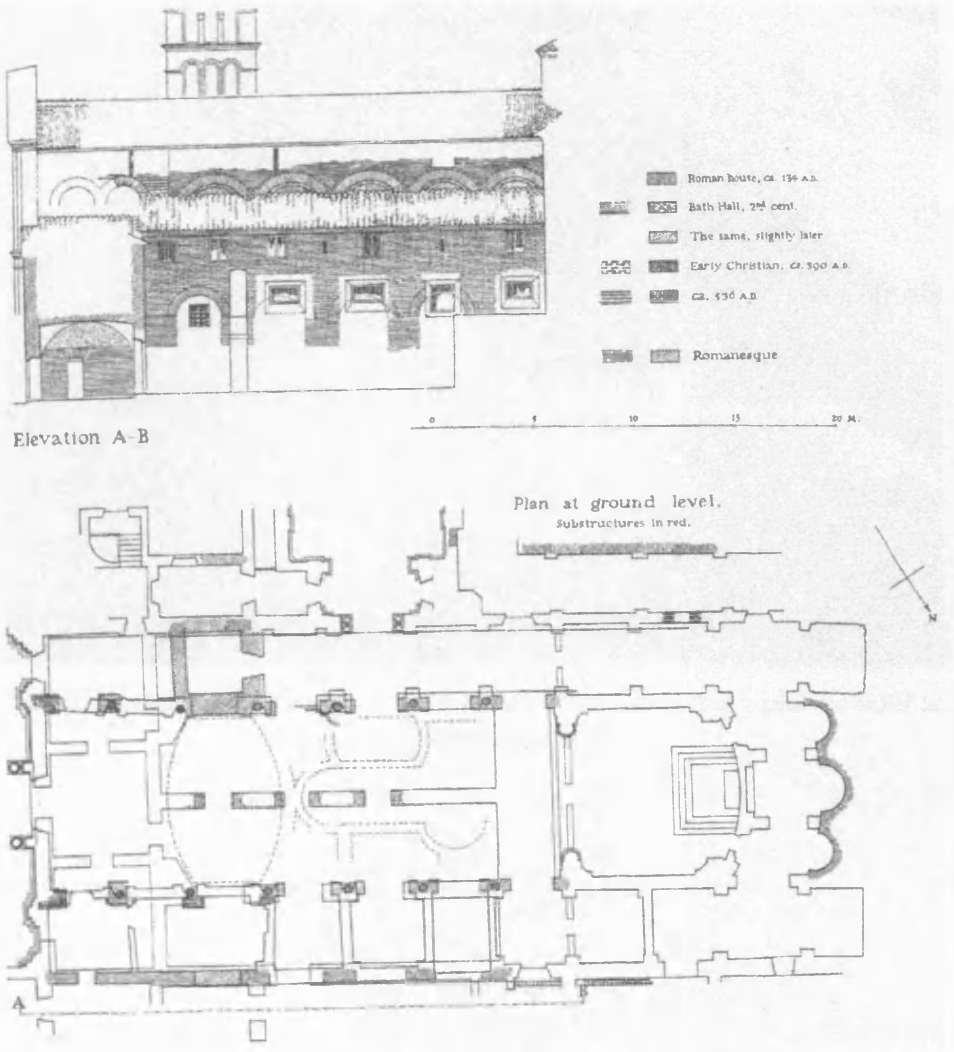

Fig. 5d. Section and plan of S. Pudenziana (from *CBCR*).

Fig. 5e. (i) S. Pudenziana. Photo of excavations of nave (from Nash E., *Pictorial Dictionary*).

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Fig. 5e. (ii) S. Pudenziana. Photo of nave excavations showing a plunge pool and later mosaic pavement (from *CBCR*).

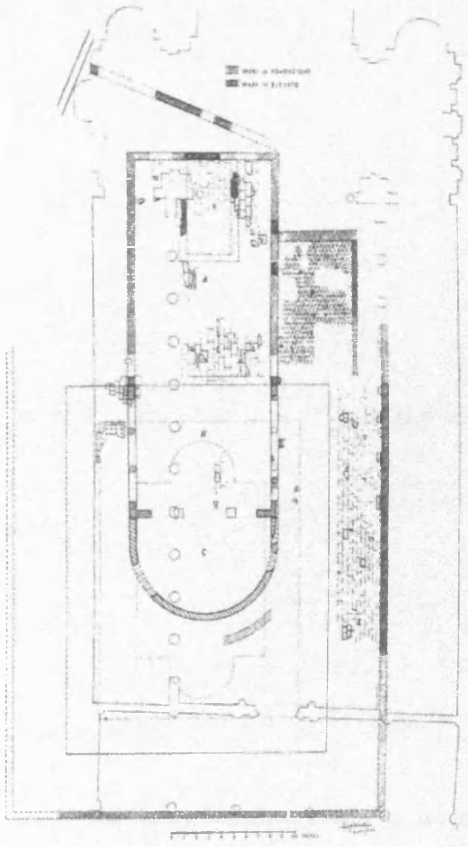

Fig. 5f. S. Pietro in Vincoli. Plan with substructures (from Colini A.M., Matthiae G., *Ricerche intorno a S. Pietro in Vincoli*).

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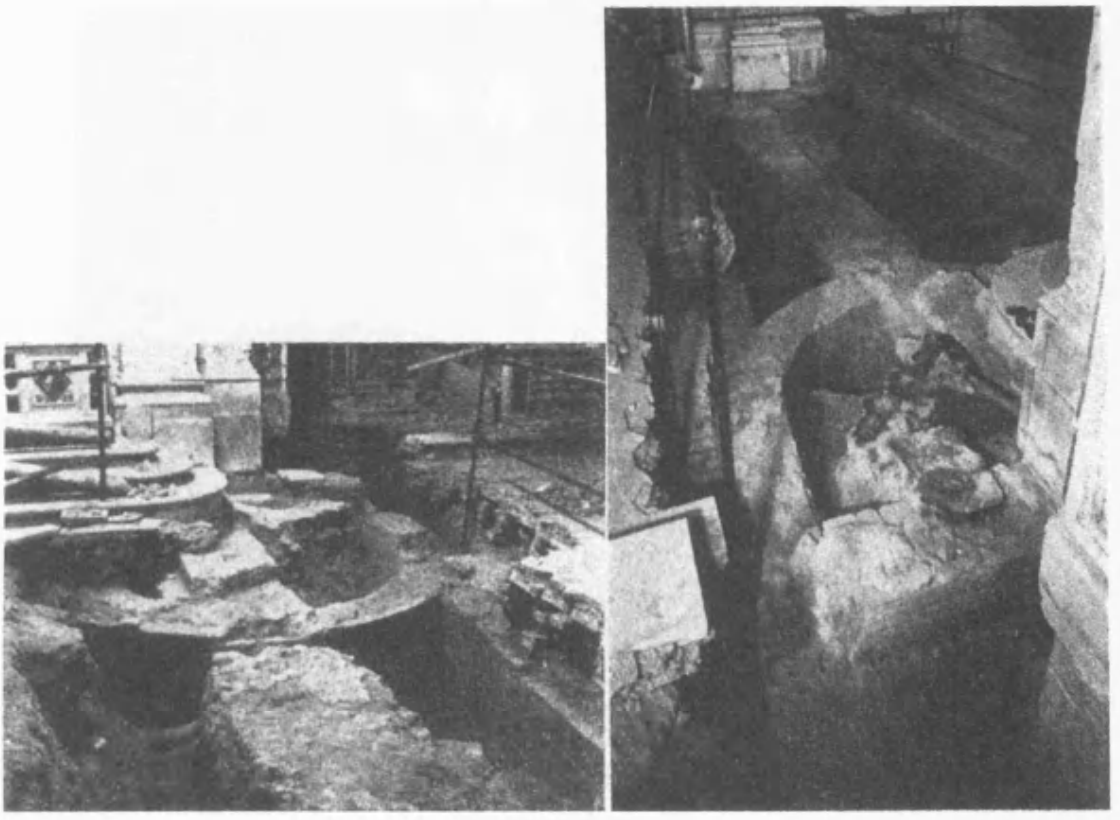

Fig. 5g. S. Pietro in Vincoli. Photos of excavations near apse showing remains of 2nd century apsed bathhouse (from Casti G.B., Zandri G., *San Pietro in Vincoli*).

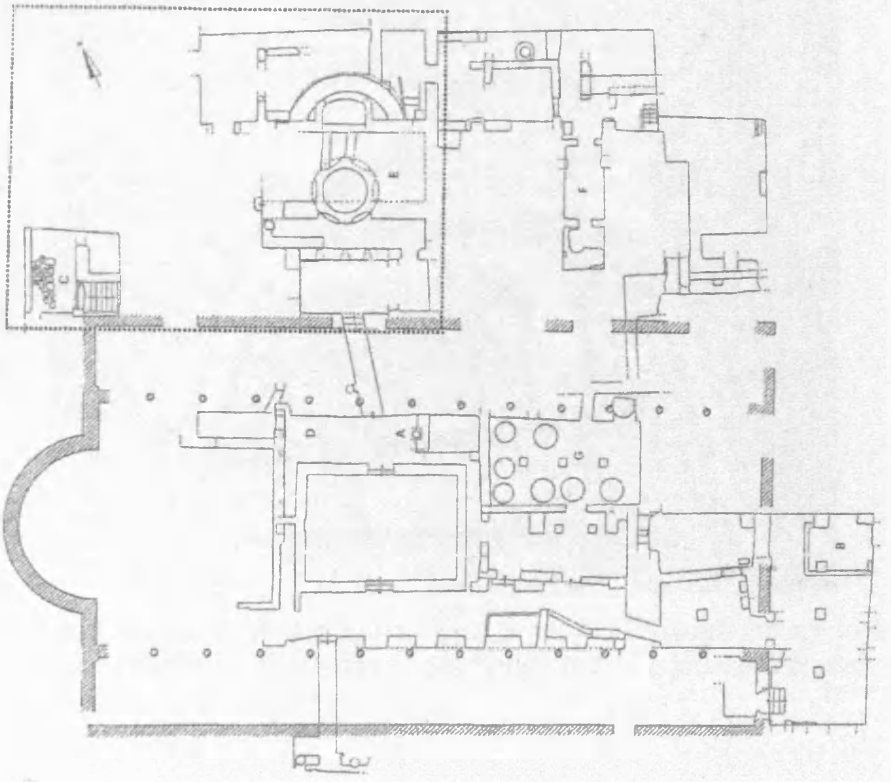

Fig. 5h. S. Caecilia. Bathhouse (F) with baptistery (E) (after *LTUR*).

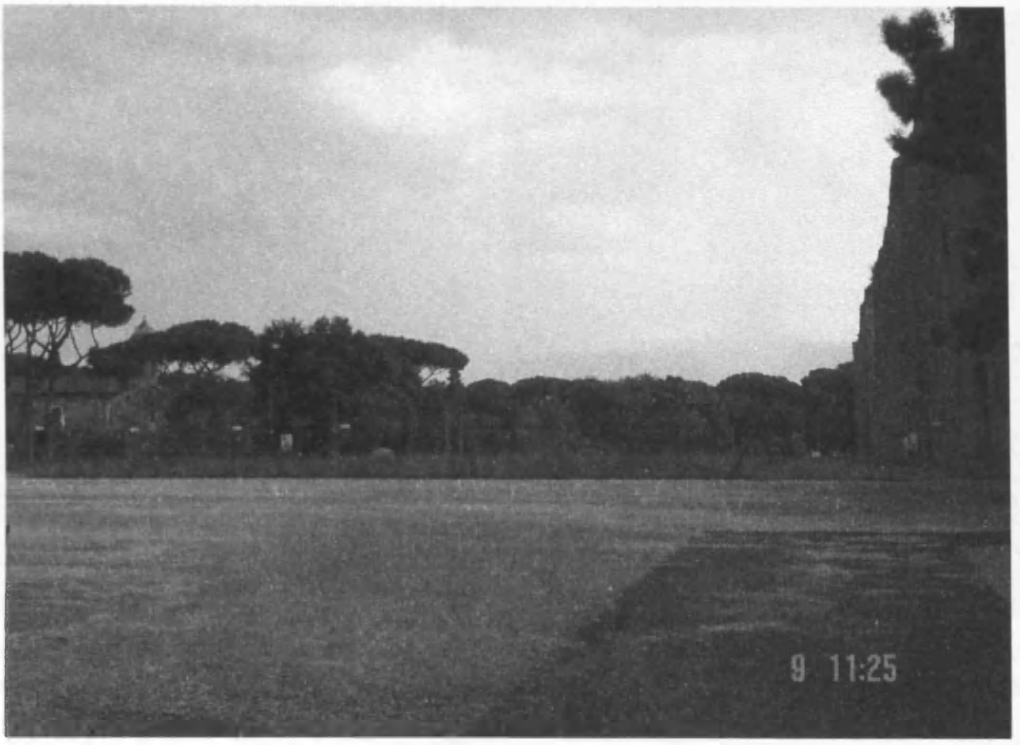

Fig. 5i. SS. Nereo ed Achilleo and Baths of Caracalla (author's photo).

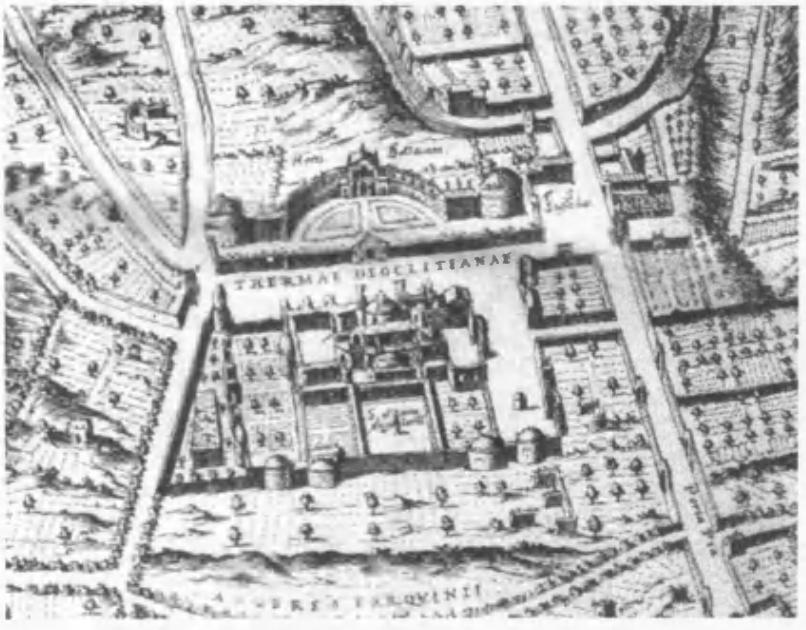

Fig. 5j. (i) Detail of plan of Rome by Du Pérac S. (1577) showing feature in north-west corner of Baths of Diocletian (from Frutaz A.P., *Le piante di Roma*).

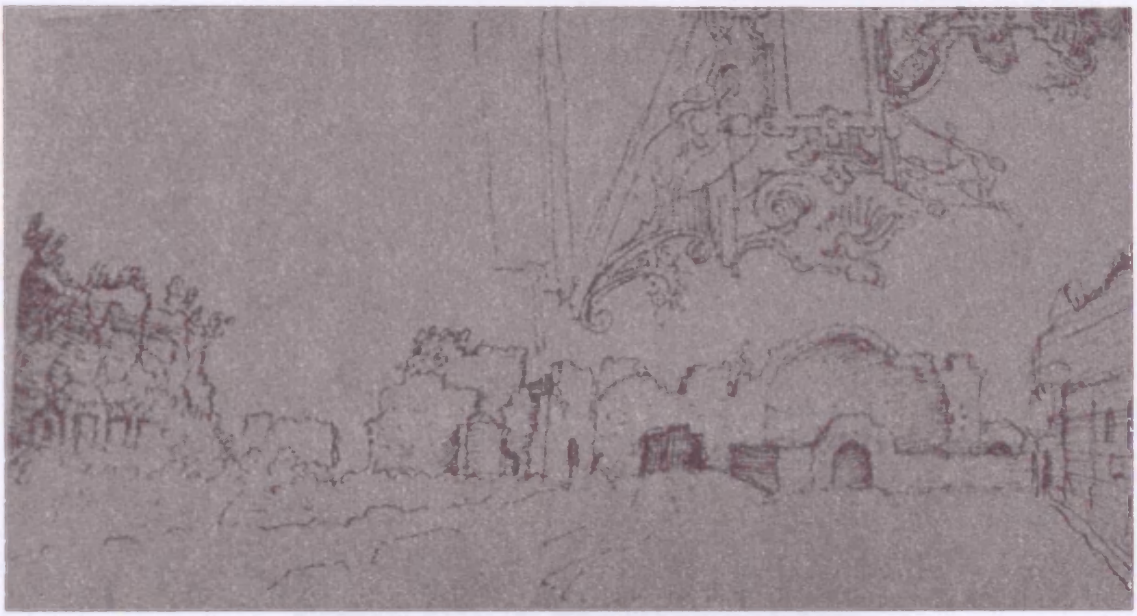

Fig. 5j. (ii) Sketch by van Heemskerck M. of north-west corner of Baths of Diocletian showing an apse and related walls (from Hülsen C., Egger H., (eds.) *Die römischen Skizzenbücher von Marten van Heemskerck*).

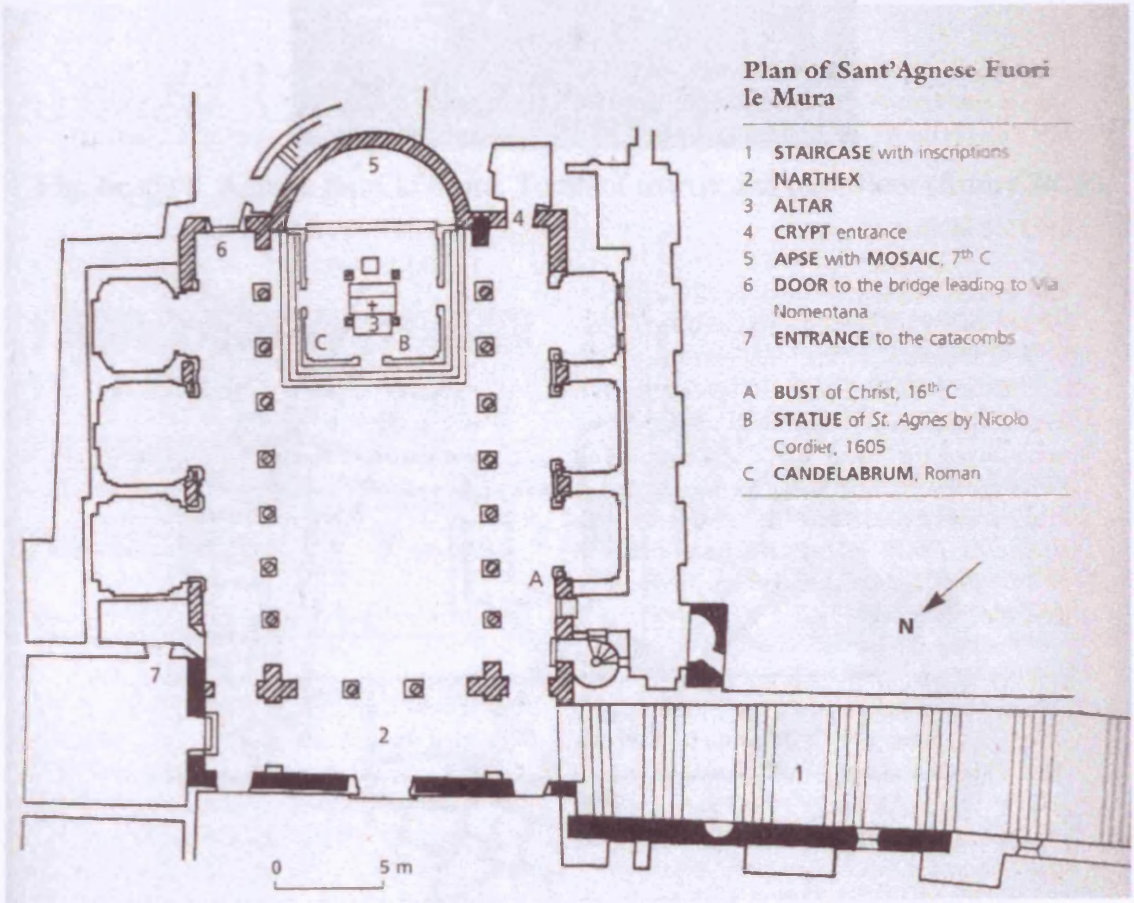

Fig. 6a. S. Agnese fuori le Mura. The parts in black are the remains of the late 5th/early 6th century church (from Webb M., *Churches and Catacombs*).

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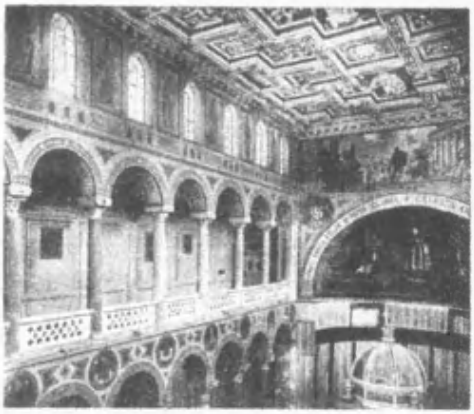

Fig. 6b. S. Agnese fuori le Mura. Gallery above tomb (from *CBCR*).

Fig. 6c. (i) S. Agnese fuori le Mura. Tomb of martyr and nave floor (from *CBCR*).

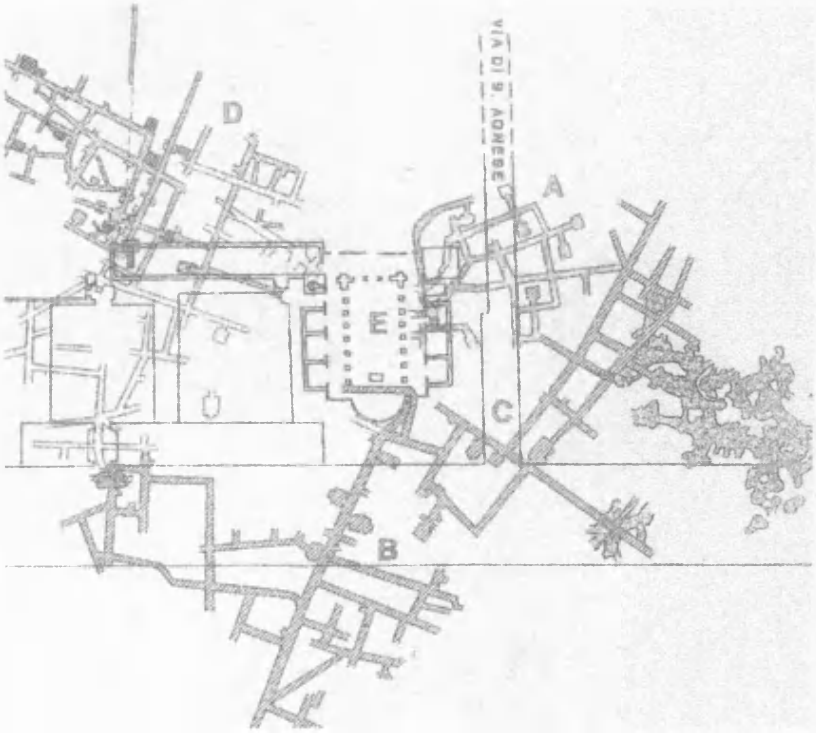

Fig. 6c. (ii) S. Agnese fuori le Mura. Basilica and subterranean catacombs (from *LTS* after Fiocchi Nicolai V. et al, *Le catacombe cristiane di Roma*).

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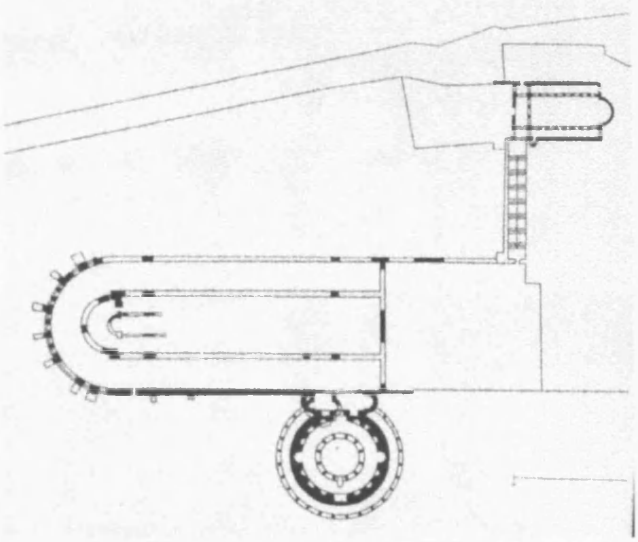


Fig. 6d. S. Agnese fuori le Mura. Reconstruction of complex with S. Costanza with attached funerary hall to the south (from Brandenburg H., *Ancient Churches of Rome*).

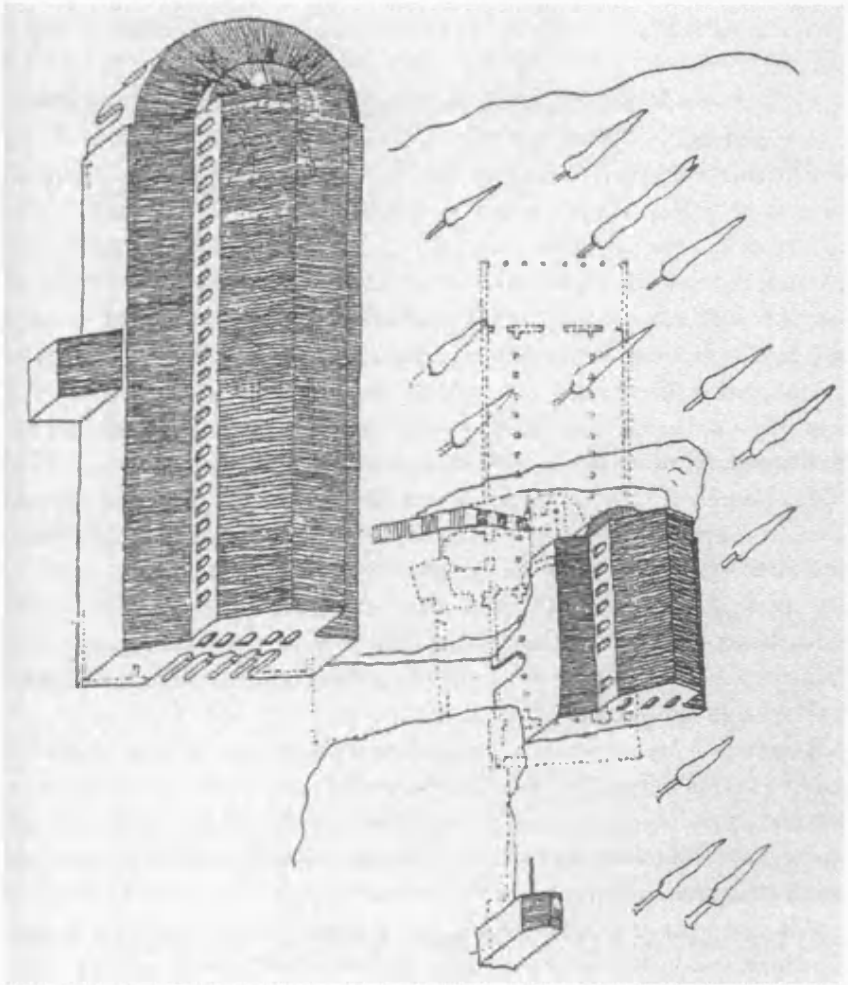
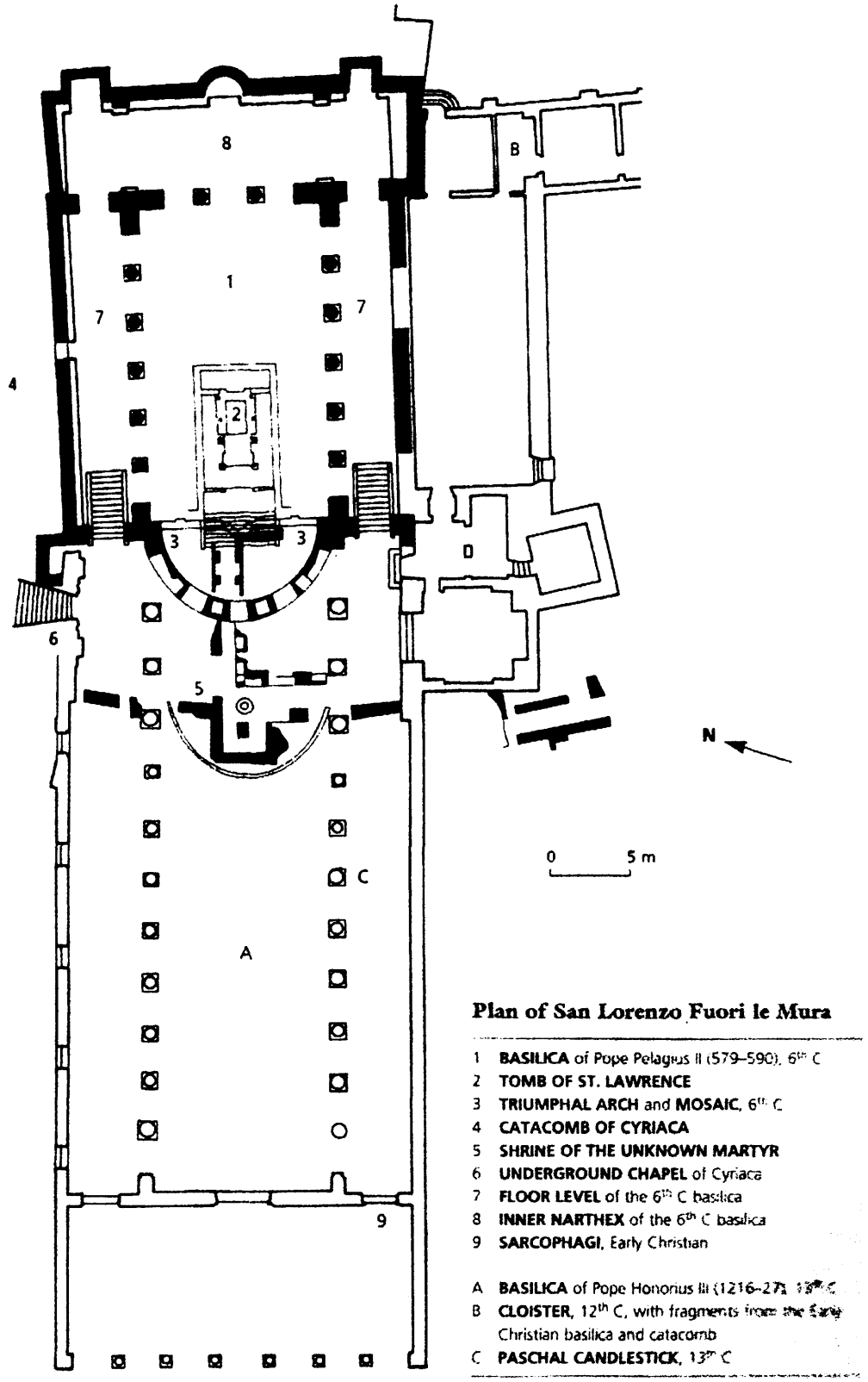


Fig. 6e. (i) S. Lorenzo fuori le Mura. Reconstruction of complex with Pelagian basilica (with outline of later Honorian church) (from *CBCR*).



Plan of San Lorenzo Fuori le Mura

1 **BASILICA** of Pope Pelagius II (579–590), 6th C
2 **TOMB OF ST. LAWRENCE**
3 **TRIUMPHAL ARCH** and **MOSAIC**, 6th C
4 **CATACOMB OF CYRIACA**
5 **SHRINE OF THE UNKNOWN MARTYR**
6 **UNDERGROUND CHAPEL** of Cyriaca
7 **FLOOR LEVEL** of the 6th C basilica
8 **INNER NARTHEX** of the 6th C basilica
9 **SARCOPHAGI**, Early Christian

A **BASILICA** of Pope Honorius III (1216–27), 13th C
B **CLOISTER**, 12th C, with fragments from the Early Christian basilica and catacomb
C **PASCHAL CANDLESTICK**, 13th C

Fig. 6e. (ii) S. Lorenzo fuori le Mura (from Webb M., *Churches and Catacombs*).

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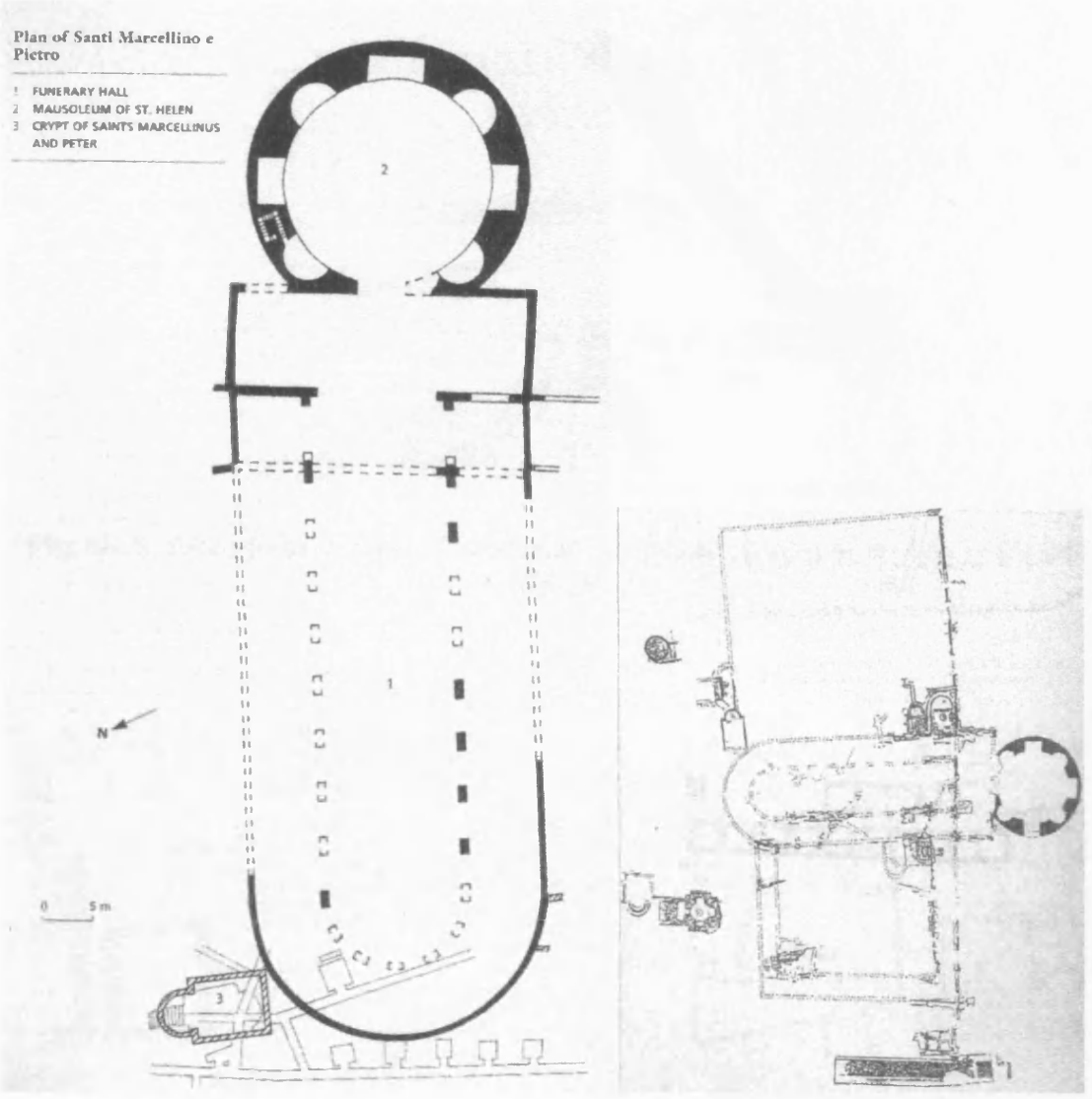

Fig. 6f. Basilica SS. Marcellino e Pietro (i) plan of basilica (left, from Webb M., *Churches and Catacombs*), (ii) plan of whole complex and revealed structures (right, from Curran J.R., *Pagan City*).

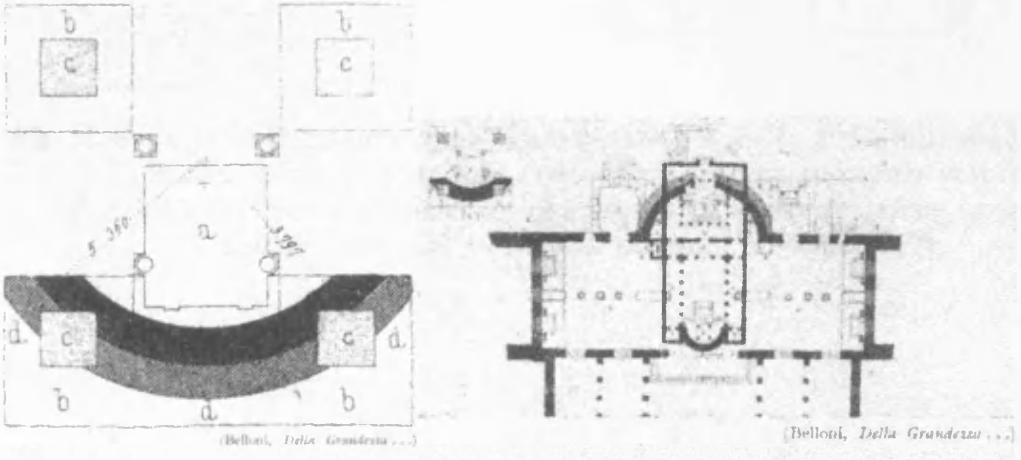

Fig. 6g. S. Paolo fuori le Mura. Plan of pre-Theodosian apse (left) and reconstruction of pre-Theodosian basilica in context of Theodosian transept (after *CBCR*).

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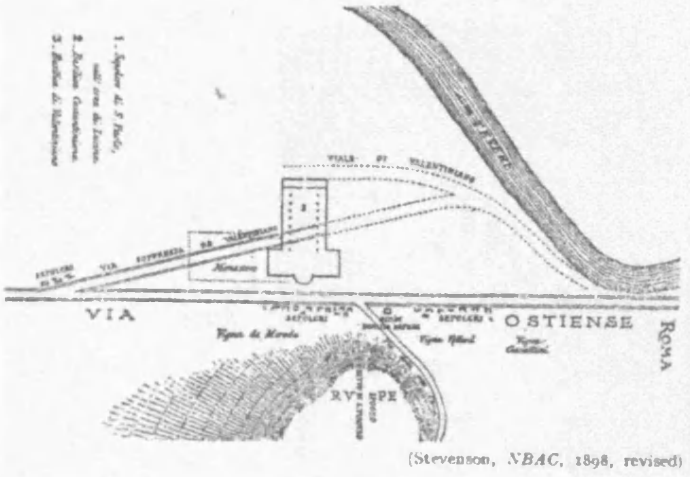

Fig. 6h. S. Paolo fuori le Mura. Theodosian basilica in context of ancient roads (after *CBCR*).

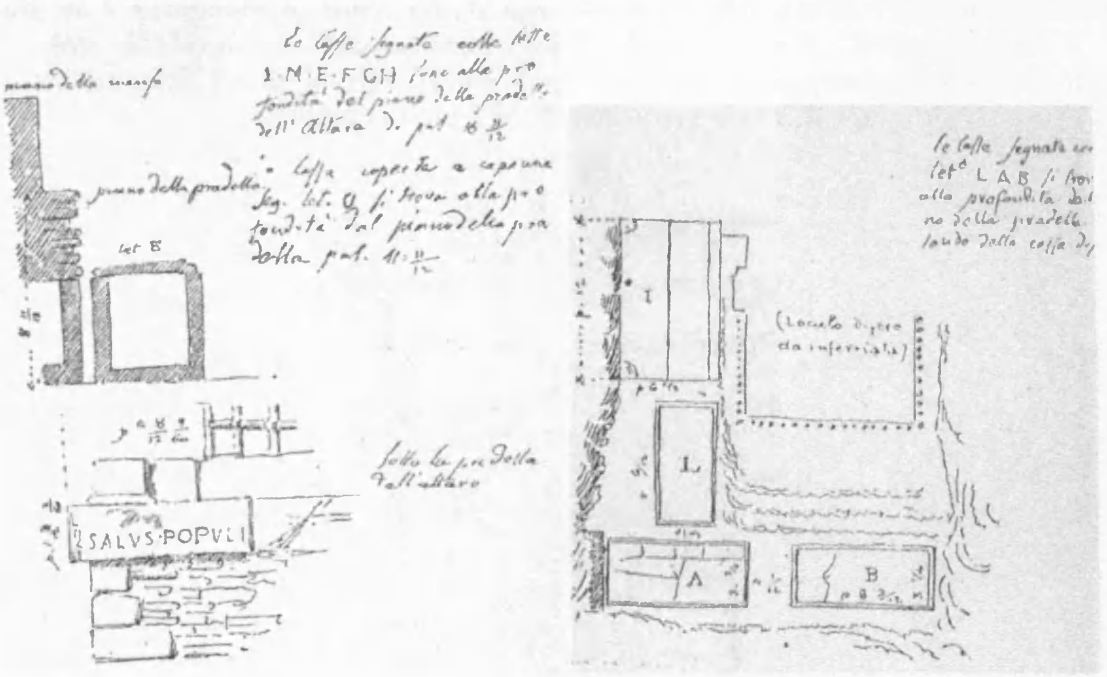

Fig. 6i. S. Paolo fuori le Mura. Vespignani sketches of shrine of St. Paul and immediate area: (i) Section through shrine with adjacent sarcophagus and north-west corner of shrine (left), (ii) Plan of altar and surrounding sarcophagi (right) (after Lanciani R., 'Scoperte presso il sepolcro di S. Paolo' in *NBAC* 1917).

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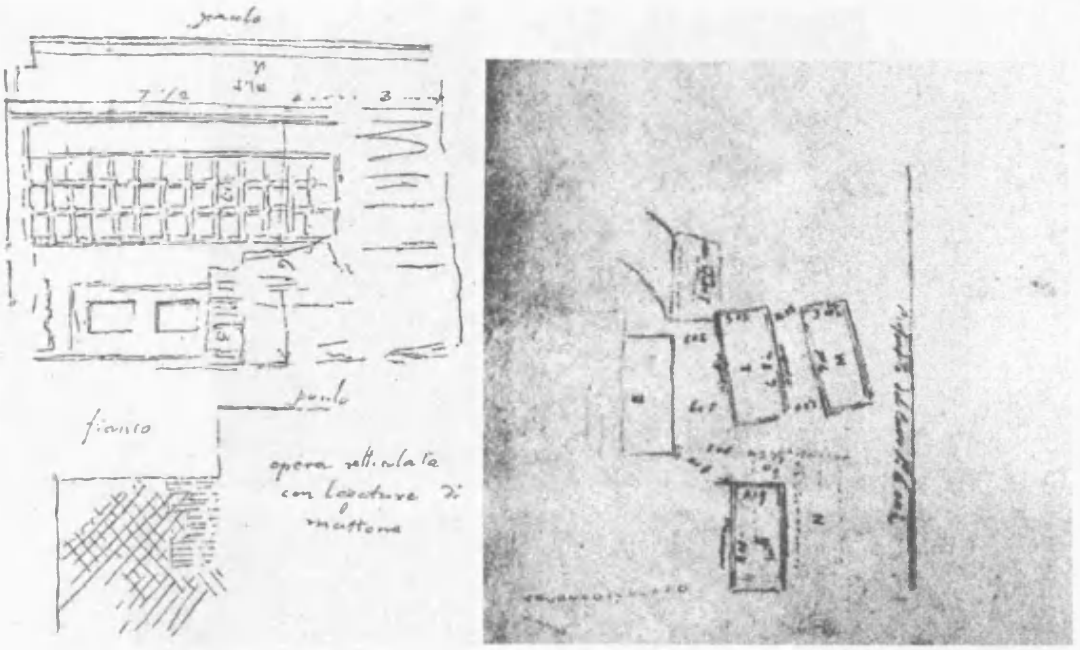

Fig. 6i. S. Paolo fuori le Mura. Vespignani sketches of shrine of St. Paul and immediate area: (iii) West face of shrine and its flank (after Lanciani R., 'Scoperte presso il sepolcro di S. Paolo' in *NBAC* 1917), (iv) Plan of sarcophagi to north of shrine and springing of pre-Theodosian apse (after *CBCR*).

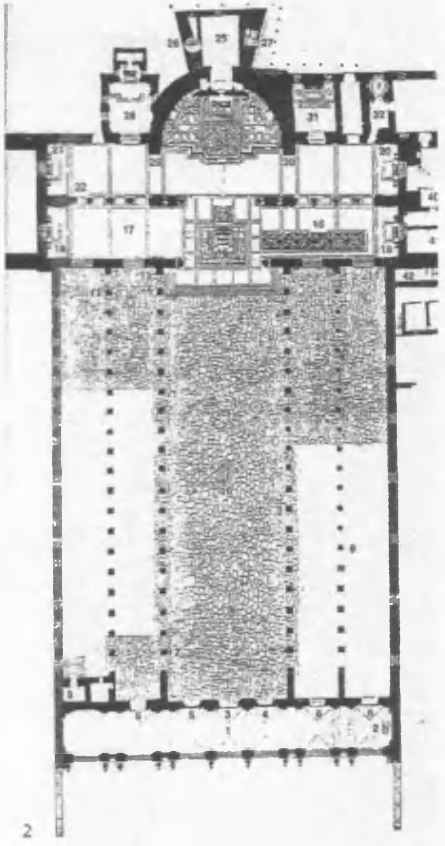

Fig. 6j. S. Paolo fuori le Mura. Theodosian basilica with shrine of Paul now at centre of transept (from Brandenburg H., *Ancient Churches of Rome*).

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Fig. 6k. S. Paolo fuori le Mura. Plaque above shrine of apostle in situ (above, from Brandenburg H., *Ancient Churches of Rome*) and a reconstruction (below, author's photo).

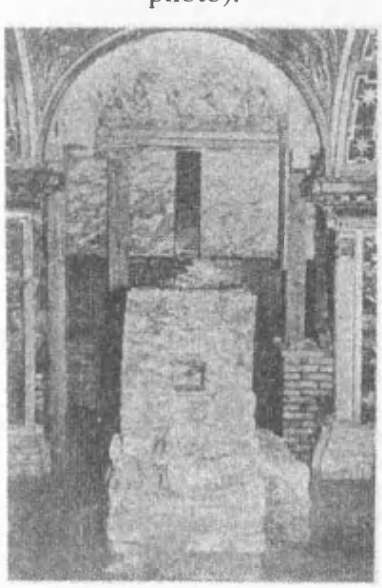

Fig. 6l. S. Pietro in Vaticano. View looking east from Clementine chapel showing Constantinian monument (after Holloway R.R., *Constantine and Rome*).

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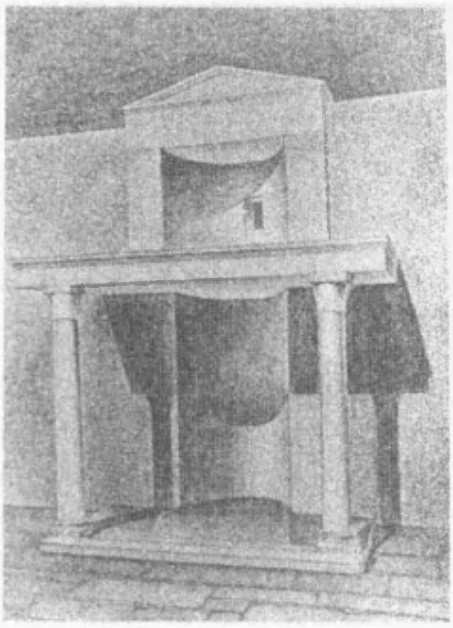

Fig. 6m. S. Pietro in Vaticano. Reconstruction of the Memoria over the apostle's grave, looking west (from Apollonj-Ghetti, B.M et al, *Esplorazioni sotto la confessione di San Pietro in Vaticano*).

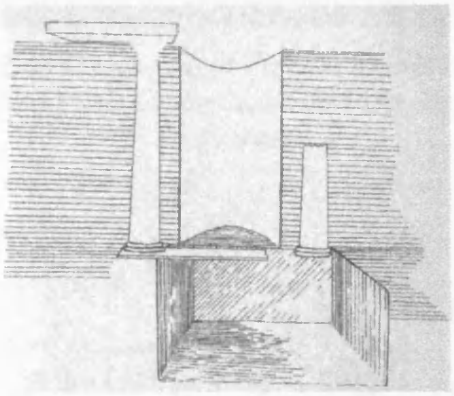

Fig. 6n. S. Pietro in Vaticano. Elements of Memoria as discovered (from Holloway R.R., *Constantine and Rome*).

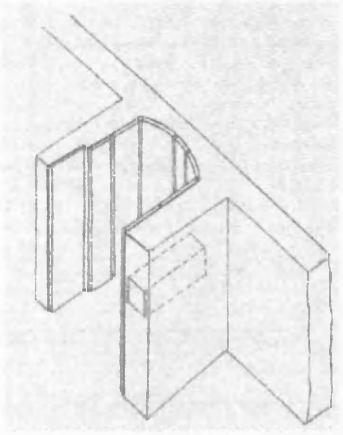

Fig. 6o. S. Pietro in Vaticano. Reconstruction of the Memoria above the grave of the apostle (from Holloway R.R., *Constantine and Rome*).

Figures

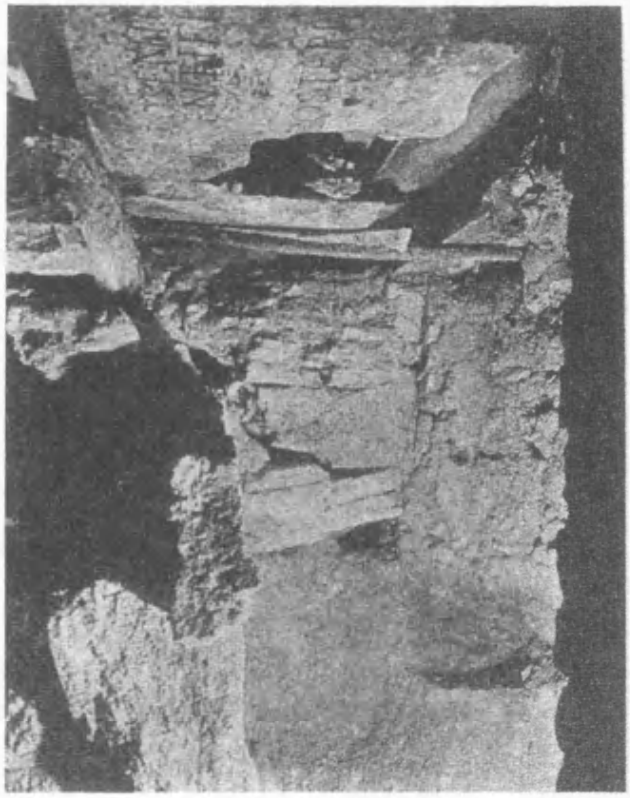

Fig. 6p. S. Pietro in Vaticano. Cover slab of Publius Aelius Isidorus above grave cavity (from Apollonj-Ghetti, B.M et al, *Esplorazioni sotto la confessione di San Pietro in Vaticano*).

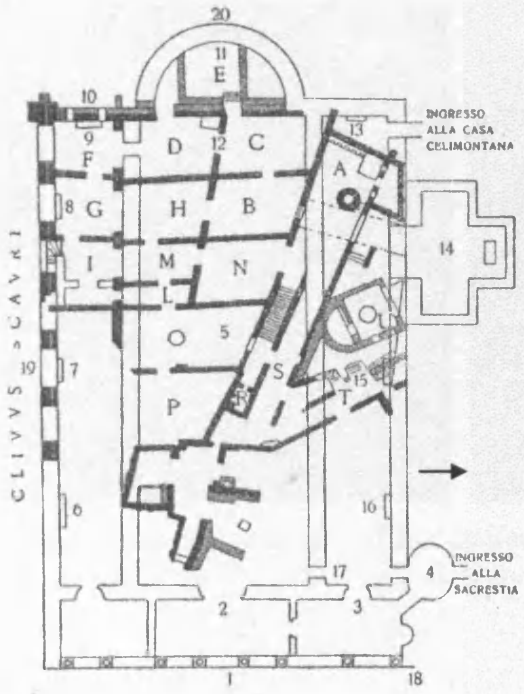

Fig. 6q. SS. Giovanni e Paolo. Plan of church substructures. 'B-D, F- I, L-N' is 3rd century insula, 'O-P' with staircase are additions of the late 3rd/early 4th century. 'S' is the alleyway and later corridor. 2nd century structures are just to the north of the latter. 'R' is the *confessio* (from Ortolani S., *SS. Giovanni e Paolo*).

Figures

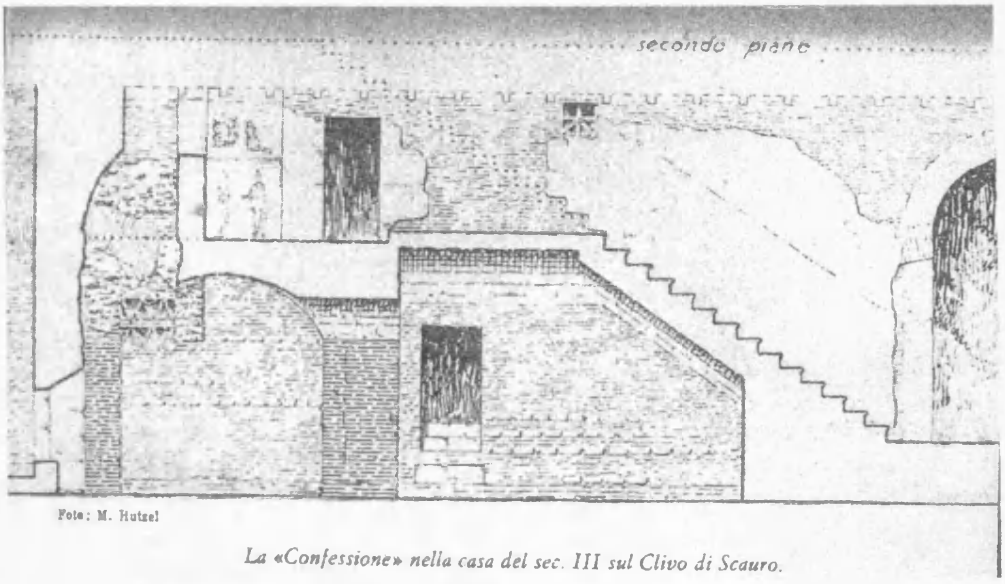

Fig. 6r. SS. Giovanni e Paolo. (i) Section of staircase in corridor 'S' with *confessio* on landing (from Colini A.M., *Storia e topografia del Celio nell'antichità*).

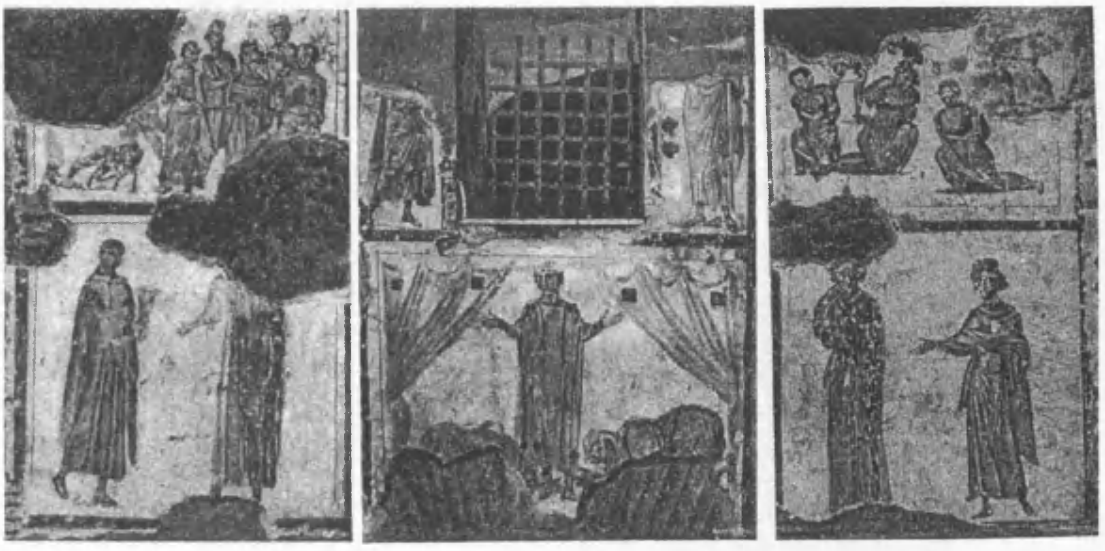

Fig. 6r. SS. Giovanni e Paolo. (ii) Paintings on walls of confessio on left, centre and right walls as shown (from Ortolani S., *SS. Giovanni e Paolo*).

Figures

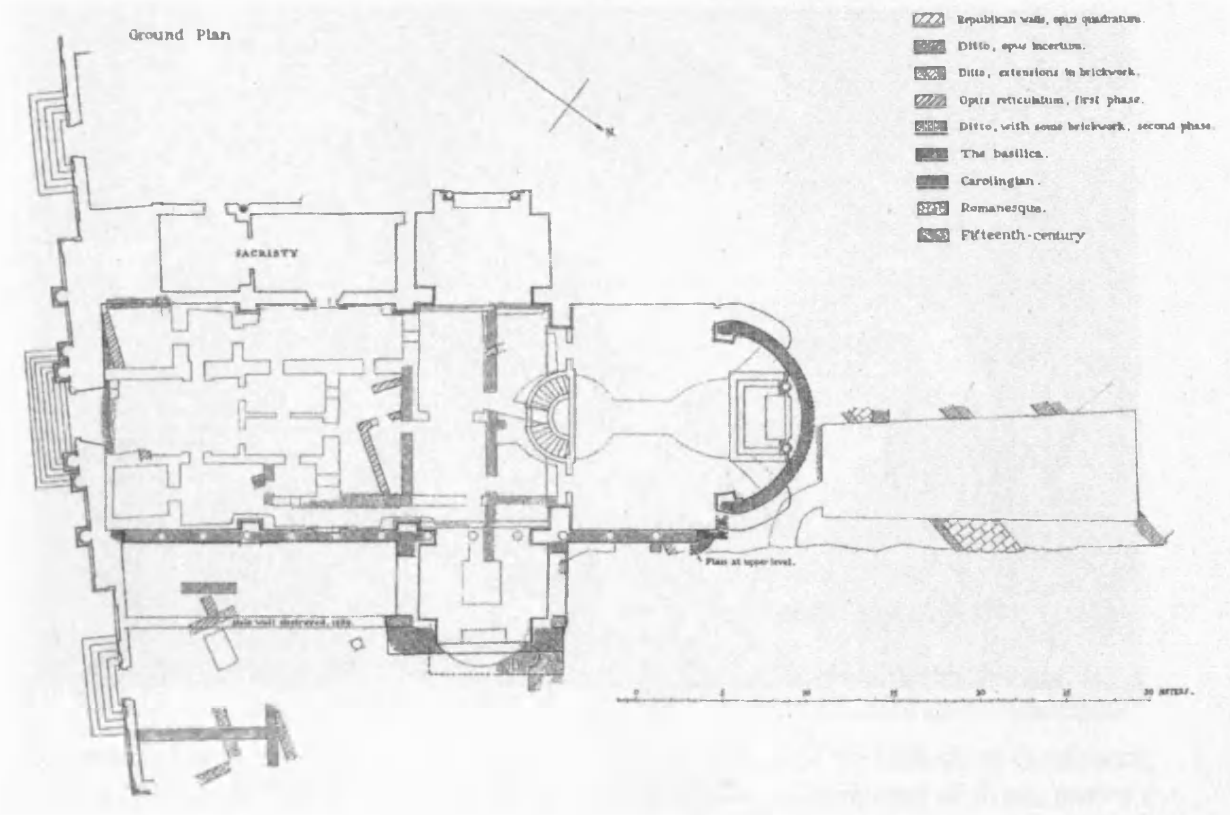

Fig. 6s. S. Susanna. Plan of substructures (from *CBCR*).

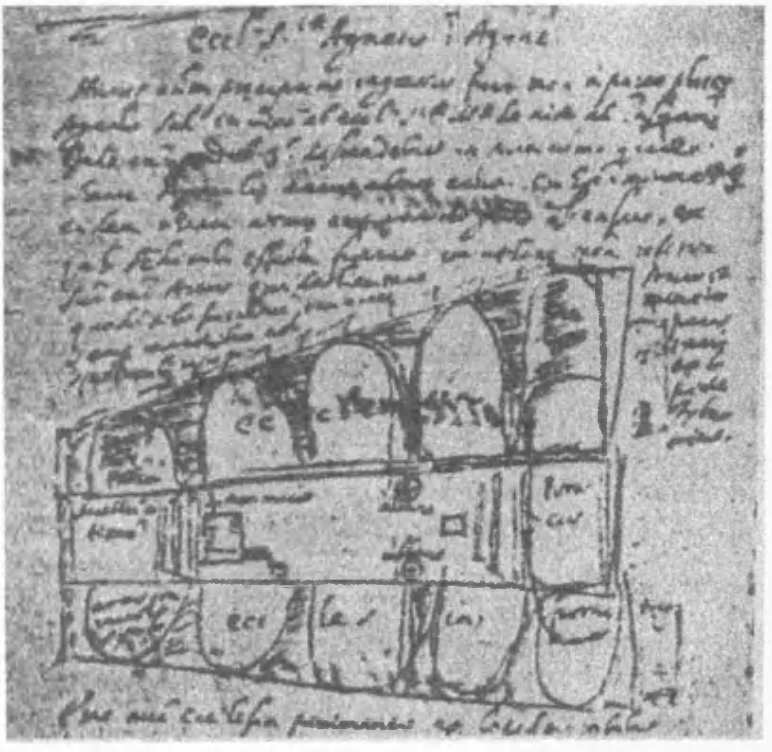

Fig. 6t. S. Agnese in Agone. Drawing by Ugonio P. (1575) (from Armellini M. & Cecchelli C., *Le chiese di Roma*).

Fig. 6u. S. Lorenzo in Panisperna. View by Vasi G. (1761) of the outside of the church looking towards S. Maria Maggiore (from Vasi G., *Delle magnificenze di Roma antica e moderna*).

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CSEL= Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum

LCL= Loeb Classical Library

SC= Sources Chrétiennes

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